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Blair in arms and artillery build-up

2,000 extra troops set for Kosovo

By MICHAEL EVANS, PHILIP WEBSTER AND CHARLES BREMNER

BRITAIN is sending a further 2,000 troops, with tanks and artillery, to Macedonia to be part of an international force for eventual deployment in Kosovo.

Announcing the armoured battle group reinforcement in the Commons, Tony Blair said the extra troops were not being sent to invade Kosovo, but to be ready to implement a peace settlement.

The decision to send the 2,000 troops, backed by 14 Challenger tanks, 40 Warrior armoured vehicles and six AS90 self-propelled guns, will raise the British military presence in Macedonia to more than 6,300.

While the deployment of the Irish Guards battle group which will take up to 30 days, was intended to send a signal to Belgrade that Nato was still determined to form the core of an international peace force for Kosovo, the commander in charge of the alliance air campaign announced that he had asked for 300 more American aircraft, to bring the total number of planes to about 1,000. Other Nato countries have also been asked to send more aircraft.

Last night the Pentagon said that the request from General Wesley Clark, Nato's Supreme Allied Commander, was being considered seriously. The aircraft he wants include more F15s, F16s, A10 "tank-busters", radar-jamming EA6B Prowlers and refuelling tankers to allow bomber pilots to stay in the air over Yugoslavia for longer periods, while hunting for Serb forces and armour in Kosovo.

The US already has 500 aircraft committed to Operation Allied Force. The proposed increase in the number of American aircraft in the region may require President Clinton to call up members of the National Guard and Reserve. Other

INSIDE

"The captain told my father, your daughter is good for wife. One of them had sex with me, the other hit me, the others kissed me."

Rape as a way of war, page 6

What is now planned on Kosovo's border with Macedonia and Albania is a mystery wrapped in a horror.

— Simon Jenkins, page 18

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European countries, including Hungary and the Czech Republic, may also be asked to give basing rights for the additional planes because of overcrowding on Italian airfields.

The increase in Nato's war effort came on the day that Serb troops carried out a deliberately provocative incursion over the Kosovo border into Albania. Although Belgrade denied any such incident, Serb troops exchanged gunfire with Albanian border forces and occupied the village of Kamenica, more than a mile inside Albania.

The occupation lasted a few hours before the Serb forces withdrew. Nato warned earlier this week that it would treat any border incursions with the "utmost seriousness".

The extra British troops being sent to Macedonia will mean that Nato forces in the country will total 14,000. The first elements of an 8,000-man Nato force to help refugees has also begun to arrive in Albania. The second British battle

group will be based on the Irish Guards, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Bill Cubitt, currently based in Germany.

There will also be elements from the Green Howards, the King's Royal Hussars, 4 Regiment Field Artillery and a 150-man armoured reconnaissance squadron from the Windsor-based Household Cavalry Regiment, equipped with 20 armoured vehicles, mostly Scimitars. Another key element will be from 32 Regiment Royal Engineers, equipped with mine-clearance and bridging vehicles. The heavy armour will be sent by ship from the German port of Emden to Salonika, in Greece.

Although the reinforcement will double the number of British tanks, self-propelled guns and Warriors in Macedonia, Ministry of Defence sources said the battle group was configured only for enforcing peace, not for military intervention in Kosovo.

Underlining this point in the Commons, the Prime Minister said: "They are being sent so that the UK can be in a position to play our proper role in the international effort to ensure the refugees are able to return to Kosovo in safety."

However, questioned by Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, Mr Blair promised that Nato would not wait for permission from President Milosevic to enter Kosovo. "It's not a question of Milosevic having a veto," he said. He also insisted that a political settlement would have to be based on the Rambouillet accord, which Belgrade had refused to sign because of Nato insistence on sending an implementation force into Kosovo. "It must be a settlement that brings lasting peace to the entire region," he said, emphasising that the force that would eventually enter Kosovo would have to be Nato-led.



A Kosovo Liberation Army guerrilla astride a donkey near the northern Albanian village of Kamenica yesterday. There were reports that the village had been set on fire by Serb forces who entered Albania and clashed with Albanian Army troops

Army charges into battle by horse

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

IT is outnumbered, battered and fragmented in the face of Serb onslaughts, but the Kosovo Liberation Army is in no mood to surrender. Hitherto, the KLA has been a group whose international renown has far outstripped its effectiveness — hardly surprising when its fighting men go to war on a donkey. Yesterday they boosted their profile in America where almost 3,000 citizens are leaving to fight in their homeland.

Grey-moustachioed men of 60 stand shoulder to shoulder with blonde women of 16 and 17, displaying a pride in their Albanian roots which has convinced them to forsake their lives in America and fight to the death against the Yugoslav Army and paramilitary troops.

Thousands of Albanian-Americans, most with no military training, are volunteering to join the KLA and wage guerrilla war on the oppressors of a homeland many have never seen. "My sisters are getting raped and my brothers getting killed. My father is already over there fighting and I want to go too," said Linda Murigi, 16, as she signed up with 300 others at a New York rally. They were flying to Tirana where they will be trained for three weeks before trying to join the KLA's struggle. Isa Kodra, a 19-year-old student and a National Guard platoon sergeant, will help. "Maybe I can help save what is left of Kosovo. The reality is Nato will only respond when they see body bags. We will fill those body bags if necessary."

Ulster prisoner releases may be halted

BY MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Government may be forced to consider halting prisoner releases if the Northern Ireland peace process has to be suspended because of the deadlock over IRA arms.

That would not only jeopardise the scheduled releases of such figures as the Brighton bomber Patrick Magee and the Ulster Freedom Fighters commander Johnny Adair, but also increase the likelihood of the Good Friday accord unravelling during a summer of contentious parades and European elections.

Government sources conceded the possibility after another fruitless day of talks at Stormont and Sinn Féin's formal rejection of the Hillsborough declaration yesterday. Conservatives and Unionists have long demanded that the release be halted in the absence of IRA disarmament and one source said: "If this doesn't work then the Government will be asked with more and more insistence why these releases are continuing."

To date 257 convicted terrorists have been freed on licence, but almost as many remain inside. Only yesterday, the four-strong Balcombe Street gang that terrorised London in the 1970s were released.

The parties returned from a 12-day Easter break yesterday with no radical new ideas for breaking the impasse caused by Sinn Féin's inability to deliver the IRA disarmament required by David Trimble.

Sinn Féin rejected the compromise proposed by the British and Irish Prime Ministers on April 1 as a "rewriting of the accord" and Gerry Adams said: "None of us should underestimate the crisis which we're now in."

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Barclays' £7m chief quits on day one

MIKE O'NEILL, the American banker hired as chief executive of Barclays two months ago, has quit after just one day in the office for health reasons (Caroline Murrell writes).

Mr O'Neill, 52, passed out in California last Wednesday after a bout of flu and his doctors found that he had a heart condition that could become dangerous if he was put under stress. Doctors in London confirmed the diagnosis on Monday, his first day with Barclays, and he quit yesterday. Mr O'Neill had a contract worth £7 million over three

years. But in the end he received nothing.

He said: "I am deeply disappointed to give up what was for me the dream appointment and the culmination of my whole career. Though the condition that has been diagnosed is not life-threatening, I have concluded that it would be unwise to take up this appointment."

The bank will now reconsider some of the candidates who were beaten to the job by Mr O'Neill.

US saviour, page 3

Pressure grows on Woodhead to quit

THE pressure on Chris Woodhead to resign as Chief Inspector of Schools increased yesterday as his former wife intensified her campaign for a government inquiry into claims that he lied about allegations of an affair with a sixth-former.

Mr Woodhead will face criticism of his leadership of the Office for Standards in Education in a report by MPs next month. The House of Commons Select Committee on Education is expected to question the impact of his high-profile style on teacher morale

and raise questions about the accountability of his office.

The immediate threat comes from the stream of revelations from his former wife, Cathy Woodhead, who has produced evidence to contradict a sworn statement by her former husband that his affair with Amanda Johnston did not begin until two years after both had left Gordano School, near Bristol, over 20 years ago.

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, has dismissed previous allegations as "title-tattle."

'Conspiracy', page 11

Jockey on cheat charge

The jockey Graham Bradley was charged with conspiracy to cheat after a long-running police investigation into race fixing. The 38-year-old is accused of ensuring his horse Man Mood did not win at Warwick in November 1996 to cheat money from bookmakers. Mr Bradley was released on police bail and will appear at Bow Street Magistrates' Court today, a Scotland Yard spokesman said. Page 44

Prodi vision for Europe

Romano Prodi wooed the European Parliament with his federalist vision and promise of Blairite reforms, saying he would work for a more integrated union with closer tax policies, leading to "true harmonisation". He also promised to make the Commission more efficient and completely transparent. Page 14

Shipyard goes up for sale

A task force has been set up by ministers to find buyers for the Govan shipyard, put up for sale by its Norwegian owners with engineering and construction operations in northern England. The aim is to find a buyer for the Glasgow yard before orders run out in the summer. Page 12

Cricket caught out by a snowball

By ADAM SHERWIN



SNOW stopped play on the opening day of the county cricket season yesterday. That is not quite as freakish as it seems. Last year the opening fixtures saw scarcely any action, but it was the second day before rain turned to snow.

This year play was cancelled between Durham and Worcestershire as 2in of snow fell on the Riverside ground in Chester-le-Street. In the other four matches only a handful of overs were bowled as cricketers and ground staff battled

with rain, sleet, thunder and bad light.

Weathermen are inclined to blame the cricketers, pointing out that the season, which has started in mid-April for a decade, used to get under way only at the end of the month.

Many Aprils, like 1998, 1999, 1986, 1983, 1981, 1979 and so on were so cold, miserable and thoroughly waterlogged that they gave cricketers and the sun no chance to shine.

In 1997 Northamptonshire were snowed off on May 7. In 1976, notoriously, it snowed on cricketers on June 2, but that

summer went on to be one of the hottest and driest of the century.

This year's sudden cold snap brought snow over most of Scotland and as far south as Derbyshire. The freezing temperatures, coupled with heavy showers, sleet, hail and snow are expected to spread across southern Britain today.

In Scotland Lothian and Border police reported a surge in road accidents as more than a foot of snow made driving hazardous.

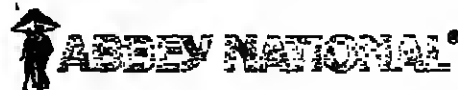
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No bombshells dropped in sombre Blair war speech

GLUM is the word for MPs yesterday — all of them, supporters and opponents of the Balkan war alike. The Commons had reassembled after Easter to hear a sombre but resolute statement from the Prime Minister.

Tony Blair's short speech was less theatrical than before, more carefully judged and in tone well judged. Flanked by all the senior figures in his Cabinet (always a sensible precaution), with the mysterious exception of the man who must find the money, Gordon Brown (always a worrying absence), Mr Blair rehearsed the familiar wor-

ries, familiar outrage and familiar determination. Beside him, Robin Cook nodded manically, George Robertson maintained a certain reserve, and John Prescott studied his fingernails.

"As I said in my first Statement to the House of Commons," the Prime Minister reminded us, "this action will take time."

Unable quite to recall Mr Blair's saying this, I checked the record. He had said the sufferings of the Kosovans would "not be ended overnight". Some 30 nights later, this seemed to understand. Not that the mood was mud-



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

nous. "Grim" describes it better but support for the Government, though it has lost its froth, has consolidated — or that was how it felt. Few had much new to say. Sir Peter Tapsell (C, Louth & Horn-castle), whose indignation had been Vesuvial last time, kept silent, perhaps humming "I told you so". Tam Dalyell made the mistake of speaking critically of the Kosovo Liberation Army (the KLA have miraculously ceased to be terror-

ists) and was heckled angrily for suggesting that they might be involved in drug trafficking. Alan Clark (C, Kensington & Chelsea) made the mistake of venturing praise for the Serbian people ("brave Christians") and was howled at for this indiscretion. From now on there are good guys and bad guys and no shades between.

Mr Blair's sobriety impressed by the spectacle of the British Left in bombing mode is scary. There nothing more

belligerent than a reformed pacifist. Clare Short gave the Defence Secretary encouraging pats. Inclining to His Master's Voice, David Winnick (Lab, Walsall N) pleaded the Prime Minister by yapping ferociously at the heels of an imagined Milosevic. Mr Winnick is putting the "creep" into mission-creep.

William Hague sounded sane but his interventions on Kosovo have somehow lacked coherence. One remains unsure what, if anything, he is actually trying to say.

By contrast, Paddy Ashdown was crisp. The Liberal Democrat Leader wanted guid-

ance on the meaning of Mr Blair's new phrase: "permissive environment".

The phrase replaces Blair's former insistence that Nato troops would have to be invited into Kosovo. But what, asked Ashdown, is a permissive environment? We wondered whether it is what a squatter encounters, finding a window open and the householder absent.

But Blair refused to speculate and told Ashdown, in the tone of a pestered parent, that this was "all being considered", adding: "This is a situation in which we have considered all the right options."

"So that's all right then," spluttered some doubting Thomases. Anyway, said Blair, "it's a mistake to say Milosevic isn't hurting". Ashdown had said nothing of the kind. Nobody doubted it was hurting. What some doubted was whether it was working. But only a few had any doubt that Nato should keep trying.

"This is military action for a moral purpose," declared Blair. The jaded soldier shuddered at this dangerously close brush with a soundbite but a more downcast kind of rectitude soon reassured itself.

Nobody at Westminster is crowing, praise be.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Dogs of war to be regulated

Robin Cook is to draw up proposals for regulating the activities of British mercenaries after the arms-to-Africa affair. The Foreign Secretary will suggest legal curbs that would apply to British military firms operating outside the United Kingdom and its dependencies. The decision is the first response from the Foreign Office to the highly critical report from the Foreign Affairs Select Committee into the department's conduct over Sierra Leone and the breaching of a UN arms embargo. Mr Cook accepted many of the committee's recommendations, including the call for a Green Paper on mercenaries to be published within 18 months.

Chipperfield to give up licence

Mary Chipperfield, the circus trainer fined for beating a young chimpanzee, is giving up the licence held by her company under which she was allowed to keep wild animals at her Hampshire property. A spokeswoman for Test Valley Borough Council said yesterday that an application to transfer the licence for the premises at Over Wallop, to an unnamed third party, had been made in December last year.

Diagnosis delay linked to deaths

Delays in diagnosis by an NHS breast screening unit could have led to the deaths of up to 11 women, the Royal Devon and Exeter Healthcare NHS Trust said. The women were among 61 found to have cancer out of 2,125 cases reviewed after failings were discovered in 1997 in the unit. The figures were released after the trust board considered the findings of an inquiry into complaints against John Brennan, the consultant radiologist in charge.

Language gap led to death

A communication breakdown between Japanese and British staff led to an engineer, Clifford Whitehead, 66, being crushed to death when a glass polishing machine was turned on as he worked on it at a television factory. Cardiff Crown Court was told. NEG and Tarmac were each fined £10,000 and the sub-contractors Westside Engineering of Caerphilly were fined £10,000. All three firms admitted breaching health and safety laws.

Duck patrols on 24-hour alert

A duck called Beatrice was under 24-hour protection last night to stop developers evicting her from her nest and taking away her eggs. The organisers of a £15 million project to modernise Bath's spas have confirmed that they wish to move the duck, which is holding up the development, and send her eggs to a wildlife sanctuary for artificial incubation. She cannot be moved without a licence from the Department of the Environment.

Advice on safer sex is ignored

Only 25 per cent of adults have changed their lifestyle because of the existence of HIV and Aids, and 56 per cent have not taken the disease into account before having casual sex, according to a MORI poll for the Terrence Higgins Trust. It found that 7 per cent of people had unsafe sex when starting a relationship. The number of newly-diagnosed cases of HIV infection rose to 2,828 in 1998, the highest annual total to be recorded.

Railways are worse now than under BR

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE railways are in a worse condition than they were under British Rail, according to a critical government report on Railtrack's first four years.

Railtrack, Britain's biggest rail company, is blamed for under-spending on replacing worn-out parts of the system and for risking long-term deterioration of the network. The company is also accused of spending heavily on short-term improvements but failing to invest sufficiently in changes that would bring long-term benefits.

Huge variations exist between regions in the quality of the network, the report says, with the Midlands and West Country faring worst, and Scotland and southeast England doing best.

John Prescott, the Transport Secretary, said that the report painted a "sorry picture of Railtrack's performance". He indicated that stricter regulation would be introduced and subsidies to the company would be controlled more tightly.

In addition, Railtrack faces the likely imposition of hefty fines if it fails to meet targets for improving train delays. It barely achieved half of last year's targets.

However, Railtrack defended its record and said that many of the failings had been in its first two years before it was privatised in 1996. The company, which makes a profit of more than £1 million a day, said the report had point-

ed out many improvements. It warned Mr Prescott that tighter regulation could jeopardise its ability to carry out a £27 billion investment programme over the next ten years.

The independent study of Railtrack investment, by the international consultants Booz Allen and Hamilton, is the most comprehensive carried out. It concludes that the company's performance in renewing the network has been "below expectations".

Although the report says that renewal of track has been better than expected, changes to other crucial parts of the network had fallen short of initial targets. Planned major signalling schemes had been replaced by remedial work. It says that, in the first two years, Railtrack made huge improvements in cutting the number of train delays attributable to its own faults and those by contractors, but since then has made little progress.

Gerald Corbett, Railtrack's chief executive, said: "We accept many of the criticisms but the report does say we have improved punctuality. If politicians want a regime in which they have greater control, they will miss the opportunity for investment that we now offer. There are big problems in performance but our investment plans are the solution. There are many good things happening and Mr Prescott must not throw out the baby with the bathwater."



William Hague arrives at Tumbidge Wells Grammar School yesterday for the launch of the Conservatives' local election campaign

Hague begins low-key poll campaign

WILLIAM HAGUE shunned the national spotlight yesterday to launch his party's local election campaign at a school in true blue Tumbidge Wells in Kent.

The move sparked confusion at Westminster over the Tories' declared aim of using the campaign to boost the party leader's public profile. Mr Hague deliberately ignored the main press launch in London in favour of the low-profile visit to a grammar school with media access limited to the BBC and a news agency. Tory officials said this was simply to avoid a press scrum disrupting the school.

Michael Ancram, the party chairman, insisted that Mr Hague was "leading from the front" by taking the campaign straight to local people. His visit, officials said, was part of

Parties underplay their chances in town hall elections, reports James Landale

the Tory election strategy of portraying the party as the "champion" of local issues and local people against the heavy hand of government.

But the confusion prompted Labour to brand Mr Hague as a "defector" of Tumbidge Wells, who was "sheltering" in Kent rather than facing the media in London.

The Tory launch came as all parties began fighting to establish benchmarks for what would and would not be successful election results. The Tories insist that a net gain of some 400 council seats on May 6 would reflect their current 29 per cent poll rating and anything above would be a bo-

mus. But the Liberal Democrats, whose campaign was launched by Paddy Ashdown yesterday, claim anything less than a gain of 2,000 would be a disaster for Mr Hague. This would bring the Tories back in their town hall struggle in 1995 just before these seats were last contested.

At the same time, Labour claims that they are set for a gloomy result, potentially losing up to 2,000 seats. In practice, all parties are underplaying their own chances and overemphasising their opponents' prospects.

Mr Ancram was particularly downbeat: "We are being very realistic. We are starting off on an opinion poll rat-

ing below what we got at the general election. We have a very hard campaign in front of us."

He dismissed Labour claims that the Tories have to gain at least 1,400 seats as "hype" and he suggested that Labour might benefit from Tony Blair's current role as a war leader. The Tories also published a dossier of what they said were examples of Labour and Liberal Democrat "sleaze and incompetence" in local government.

Mr Ashdown refused to comment on Mr Hague's apparent relaunch and new strategy. "I never intrude on other people's grief," he said.

He said the Tories' claim to be champions of local democracy was "rank hypocrisy" and his attacked Labour for "promising much but delivering little" in local government.

Chris and Debbie are Tory kitchen cabinet

By TIM HAMES
AND ADAM SHERWIN

AFTER THE Gold Blend couple, meet Chris and Debbie, the Tory Blend pair. The Conservative Party will unveil a married couple as the stars of its new election broadcasts, but at least this domestic drama can claim brevity as its saving grace.

In a concession to viewers, the party has produced the shortest broadcast legally permissible, a mere two minutes and forty seconds.

When the "blipert" broadcast is aired in Wales tonight, viewers will be introduced to Chris and Debbie, representatives of Middle Britain, who will articulate what the Tories see as the nation's concerns around their kitchen table.

The pair, played by actors, are a typical young married couple without children. Chris is a sales manager for a computer company, Scottish, in his mid 30s, who supported the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher but who bolted to Tony Blair in 1997. Debbie is a part-time fit-



John Macneill and Jonell Elliott as the "typical" Tories Chris and Debbie

ness instructor, English, in her late 20s, who, after some agonising, stuck with the Tories last time.

Chris moans about his hangover, Debbie is concerned about hospital waiting lists. In future broadcasts, they will chew over the alleged inevitability of the euro before deciding that something "unattractive, unknown and unpopular" cannot be inevitable. The Shadow Cabinet will have no role in the broadcasts.

The couple will appear in Conservative broadcasts un-

til the European elections in June — and possibly beyond, if they succeed in improving the Tories' electoral performance.

The man who created Chris and Debbie hopes the couple will prove as popular as the last pairing he helped to engineer: the *Big Breakfast* team of Johnny Vaughan and Denise Van Outen. Ceri Evans, director of presentation at Conservative Central Office, launched Johnny and Denise during his time as creative director of Channel 4. The principle

behind Chris and Debbie is the same: "It's about making people feel comfortable with having the couple in their living rooms," he said.

Mr Evans, 37, has achieved an ambition by shortening the length of party political broadcasts: "Less is more in communication terms. Any longer than a couple of minutes and you are intruding."

He worked on a brief sketched out by William Hague. "William wanted a reflection of what he had heard informally at countless 'Listening to Britain' meet-

ings. He wanted to hear the language people had used to talk about their lives. I developed the characterisation and the setting."

Special attention has been paid to getting the right kitchen table. "It isn't an Ikea table, it is made in Britain. We want a kitchen that looks like everywhere, anywhere," Mr Evans said.

Chris is played by John Macneill, 34, a Scot, and Debbie by Jonell Elliott, 29, from London. The pair have a history that might not make them obvious role models. Elliott, a former Grange Hill tomboy, starred in Anthony Shaffer's graphic play *Murderer*, which opens with a 20-minute depiction of a woman being disembowelled. Macneill played the lead in a theatrical production entitled *Gratuitous Sex and Violence*.

Central Office has told them not to talk about their roles, lest their political views contradict their portrayals. "We picked the best actors for the roles. We did not pick them for their politics," Mr Evans said.

Jail officers 'should be more like nurses'

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

PRISON officers should deal with offenders with the same caring attitude as nurses have for hospital patients, the Chief Inspector of Prisons says today. Sir David Ramsbotham calls for ruthless action by Prison Service managers to rid jails of a culture in which prisoners are treated as subordinates and staff resist change and improvements in conditions.

Sir David's annual report makes a strong attack on old-style practices and attitudes, including the "dodging" of responsibility by management. The Chief Inspector says: "There are masses of people who are motivated by wanting to work with prisoners. They

feel there is something wrong with some of the old-style culture that treats a prisoner as somebody who is a subordinate."

"You need the same responsibility of care for a prisoner as a nurse has over a patient in hospital."

He calls on older staff in many of the 135 jails in England and Wales to change their approach towards prisoners to one of "human engagement", and urges Martin Naray, the new Director-General of the service, to mount a determined offensive against the old culture.

"It is inward-looking, it is a blame culture and it does the name of the Prison Service no good," Sir David says. He accuses some older officers in jails of maintaining the histor-

STRAW TACKLES PROBATION SERVICE

Jack Straw has criticised the Probation Service for failing to take tough action on offenders who miss interviews. The Home Secretary said it was difficult to understand why offenders were able to miss three interviews before breach action was triggered. In an effort to get rid of the public impression that community sentences are soft, the community service order is to be renamed the criminal work order and a probation order is expected to become the community supervision order. Mr Straw unveiled plans to cut the number of local probation services from 55 to 42. The service will be headed by a National Director with chief probation officers, who will be paid by and appointed by the Home Office. Leading article, page 19

mate authority of the prison service.

He says that too often existing industrial relations arrangements result in procedures being used that drag on for months, delaying and disrupting the implementation of improvements in the treatment of prisoners.

Sir David blames the management of the service and the Prison Officers' Association for the existing state of industrial relations.

He hopes that the changes can be implemented throughout the service without a battle in which a lot of people are wounded, although most senior prison governors would disagree because of the power of the Prison Officers' Association and its capacity to cause disruption. The annual report

calls on senior management in the Prison Service to be much tougher in insisting on maintaining standards in jails. Sir David is understood to be furious at the failure of governors and area managers in some parts of the country to act on appalling conditions found in some jails and young offender institutions.

The Chief Inspector also highlights the growing number of prisoners over 60, including one 87-year-old in Wymott prison who moves around with the aid of a Zimmer frame. In 1997, there were 837 prisoners over the age of 60 including 226 men serving sentences for sexual and violent offences. One 76-year-old man recently detained in Norwich prison had been arrested on his 52nd wedding anniversary.

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Barclays

SAFETY AIRBAGS HAVE CAUSED

Barclays banked on US saviour

The ideal man
to revive an
ailing bank ...
Caroline
Merrell on a
bleak outcome

THE appointment two months ago of Mike O'Neill, a 52-year-old American banker and former US Marine, as chief executive of a major British bank was accompanied by a blaze of publicity.

Mr O'Neill, recruited from the Bank of America, was to unite the Barclays board in the wake of the sudden departure of Martin Taylor at the end of last year. In the event, the exit of Mr O'Neill was even more sudden: the man taken on to revive the bank's ailing fortunes lasted just one day because of ill-health.

Mr Taylor had left Barclays abruptly after falling out with other executives about the future direction of the bank. He received a £1.5 million payoff. The bank trawled Europe and America to find a replacement, and all the bank's top executives were considered.

Mr O'Neill appeared to be the perfect candidate, and the bank was prepared to pay him £7 million. He had spent 23 years in banking and had overseen the merger of two of America's biggest banks. He



Mike O'Neill looked fit and tanned when photographed on his appointment, but colleagues said he looked tired on his brief return to the City

was also, he claimed, a confirmed Anglophile, having spent seven years here as a banking consultant. At only 52, Mr O'Neill saw the job as the pinnacle of his career, and Barclays saw him as its saviour.

Unfortunately, those twin ambitions suffered a sudden reversal when Mr O'Neill had a severe bout of flu. He delayed his arrival in London, originally scheduled for March 26, and then, last Wednesday, he collapsed in California.

After extensive tests in America, he was found to have an arrhythmic (irregular) heart-beat. According to the US doctors, the condition could worsen under stressful conditions. They advised him against continuing with the Barclays job.

He immediately contacted Sir Peter Middleton, the group chief executive, who has been standing in since the departure of Mr Taylor. Sir Peter was understandably alarmed and advised Mr O'Neill to fly to London to discuss the matter. He arrived in Britain last Sunday and the next day went to see the doctors, hired by Barclays, who had passed him fit originally. Their medical report backed the findings of the American doctors. The British

doctors — Harley Street specialists — said that it would not be in the bank's interests for the American to take up the position. After a brief discussion between Sir Peter and Mr O'Neill, it was decided that he would leave. He was offered no compensation and he did not ask for any. As Sir Peter said: "All he has cost us was the price of a few plane tickets between here and America."

Those who saw Mr O'Neill on Monday were shocked by his appearance. When he was appointed, he appeared to be the vision of Californian fitness, slim and tanned. On Monday, he looked extremely tired and was disappointed about the outcome of events.

Barclays convened an emergency board meeting at 7pm on Monday and yesterday issued a terse statement. At first the share price plummeted on the news but it then made a sharp recovery.

Barclays Bank without Mr O'Neill at its helm becomes much more of a takeover target. Sir Peter must now go through the whole recruitment process again.

Business, page 23
Comment, page 25

Why stress puts strain on heart

EXPECTING a chief executive to lead an international company when he is suffering from uncontrolled atrial fibrillation, an irregularly beating heart, is like expecting Damon Hill to win a grand prix with a car in which the timing has slipped and is backfiring. Barclays Bank must have hoped that after his pre-employment medicals, Mike O'Neill would fire on all cylinders.

A pre-employment medical examination is a skilled task, requiring much experience and a wide-ranging knowledge of medicine. In many countries, such examinations include invasive investigations ranging from thallium scans for the heart to colonoscopies for the bowels.

In atrial fibrillation, the heart rhythm is irregularly irregular. This favours the production of small clots, which can cause a stroke. The tasks that one can undertake after developing atrial fibrillation depend on the underlying cause, and the degree of control that a doctor is able to achieve. A heart can be irretrievably damaged by an infection or other cause, in which case it would be unwise to continue with a stressful job.

There are four chambers of the heart, which need to beat in the correct order. The two atria fill with blood, which periodically flows into the two ventricles. These pump the

MEDICAL BRIEFING

blood either into the lungs or around the body. An irregular action makes itself felt as palpitations, and the inefficiency brought on by the arrhythmia may make the patient breathless, faint and, if it is persistent, abnormally tired.

With atrial fibrillation, the atria may beat up to 600 times per minute, and the ventricles will respond with up to 180 beats. Medication can slow the ventricular rhythm to 70 beats, making the palpitations no longer obvious.

Atrial fibrillation may be part of the ageing process or the result of underlying disease. If the cause is an over-active thyroid gland, it is easily corrected. If it is coronary heart disease or high blood pressure, a defibrillator is used to restore the rhythm.

The fibrillation may be symptomatic of heart failure from other causes, which may be treated with beta-blockers, ACE inhibitors and diuretics. Rheumatic heart disease, damage to the heart valves or excessive intake of alcohol can also cause the condition.

Dr Thomas Staufford is a medical adviser to Barclays, but has never been involved in the case of Mike O'Neill.

DR THOMAS
STUTTFORD

BANKER'S HEART BELONGS TO SAN FRANCISCO

FROM GILES WHITTELL
IN LOS ANGELES

THE Californian banker whose heart trouble forced him out of his job at Barclays may also have been suffering from a troubled soul — caused by a yearning to return to a city with blissful climate, high-tech health clubs and world-class private healthcare.

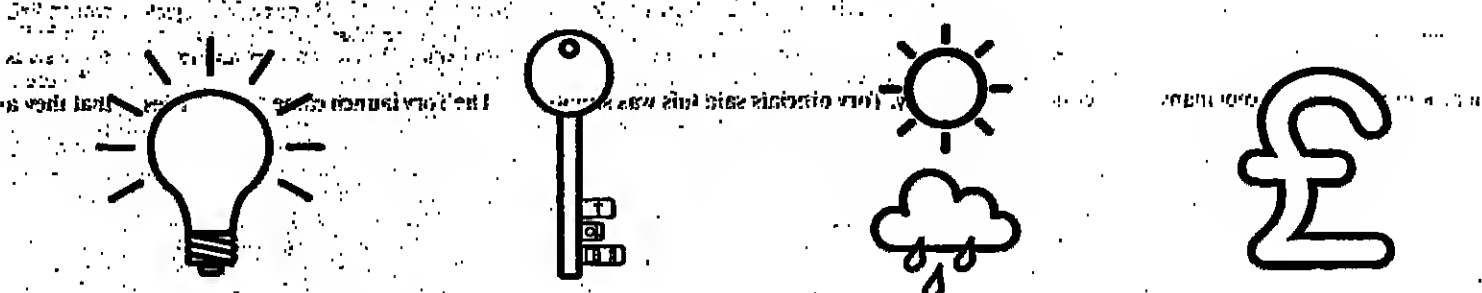
Michael O'Neill had reason to be homesick, not least because as chief financial officer of Bank of America he earned \$9.5 million (£5.6 million) in 1997 alone — more than enough for a San

Francisco lifestyle that loves a steady stream of top business figures.

The Bay Club, downtown San Francisco's most exclusive gym, occupies the basement of the Bank of America headquarters (members can surf the Internet and return e-mails while exercising). Two blocks away is a waterfront jogging path heavily used by health-conscious bankers.

The heart condition might have been spotted earlier in San Francisco, thanks to the personal trainers and physicians assigned to senior American executives by health clubs and medical insurers.

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'Safety' airbag may have killed woman in head-on crash

BY RUSSELL JENKINS
NORTH WEST CORRESPONDENT

AN AIRBAG may have caused a woman's death in a head-on crash, an inquest was told yesterday. Jennifer Reichardt was said to have suffered a rare skull fracture when the inflating bag knocked her backwards into her seat's headrest with the force of falling off a building.

Her family is now calling for car manufacturers to place warnings on the steering wheels of cars with airbags, advising a minimum distance to sit from the wheel. The other car in the collision had no airbag, and the driver walked away with a cut lip.

The inquest at St Helens, Merseyside, is the first in Britain to consider whether the force of an airbag inflating contributed to a death during an accident. The case is being followed closely by manufacturers after concern abroad, especially in America where airbags have been blamed for a number of deaths, mostly of children.

Ms Reichardt, 47, a legal secretary, from Rainhill, St Helens, was driving her Rover 400 at an estimated 19mph in January last year when she was in collision with a 13-year-old Opel driven at approximately 27 mph. Dr Kenneth Mason, who treated her at Whiston Hospital, said her head injuries were unlike any



Jennifer Reichardt: family wants warnings in cars

anything he had seen in 17 years of emergency medicine. "This is the first case I have seen where I suspected it might be an airbag. I considered the possibility that the injury was caused by being thrown back by an airbag against the head restraint."

Ernest Gradwell, a pathologist, said that Ms Reichardt had died from head injuries of a kind he had never seen before from a traffic accident. She suffered a "very uncommon" fracture which formed a ring at the base of the skull. There appeared to be no contact with the windscreen or steering wheel.

Dr Gradwell said: "Miss Reichardt received a force to the front of her skull from

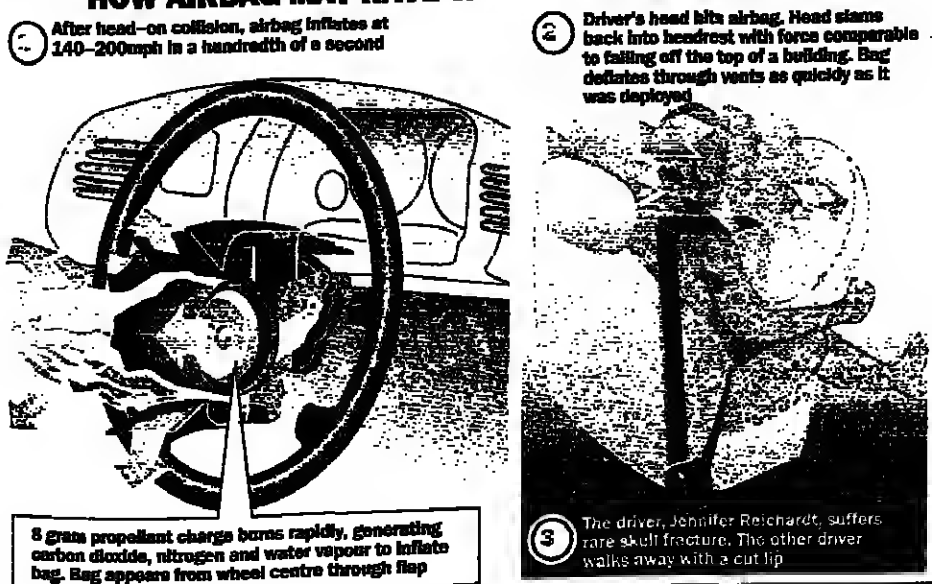
which she could not have survived. It would be a similar force to someone jumping from the top of a building."

PC Harry Walsh, senior vehicle examiner with Merseyside Police, thought that the injuries were caused by the airbag rather than the car's bulkhead. He agreed with counsel that manufacturers should do more to warn motorists of potential dangers. James Byrne, counsel for the family, had suggested a simple warning on steering wheels, advising a minimum distance to sit from the wheel.

Mr Byrne said: "The evidence is that an airbag which is supposed to be a safety feature has essentially shattered the skull of the driver. If it is possible for a man driving a 13-year-old car to walk away from a head-on collision without an airbag in his car, it looks like Jennifer Reichardt could have hobbled away in a plaster had she not had an airbag in her car." Airbags inflate at 140 to 200mph in one hundredth of a second. Mr Byrne said, and in the motor industry their inflators are treated as explosive devices.

Paul Leyland, 22, the other driver involved in the collision, said that his car had failed to negotiate a bend. His only injury was a cut lip. Mr Leyland was fined £250 for driving without due care and attention. The inquest, with a jury, is expected to end today.

HOW AIRBAG MAY HAVE CAUSED DRIVER'S DEATH



BALKANS WAR: VICTIMS OF CONFLICT



A nurse collects medicine bottles damaged in a raid

No relief for the dying in Belgrade hospital



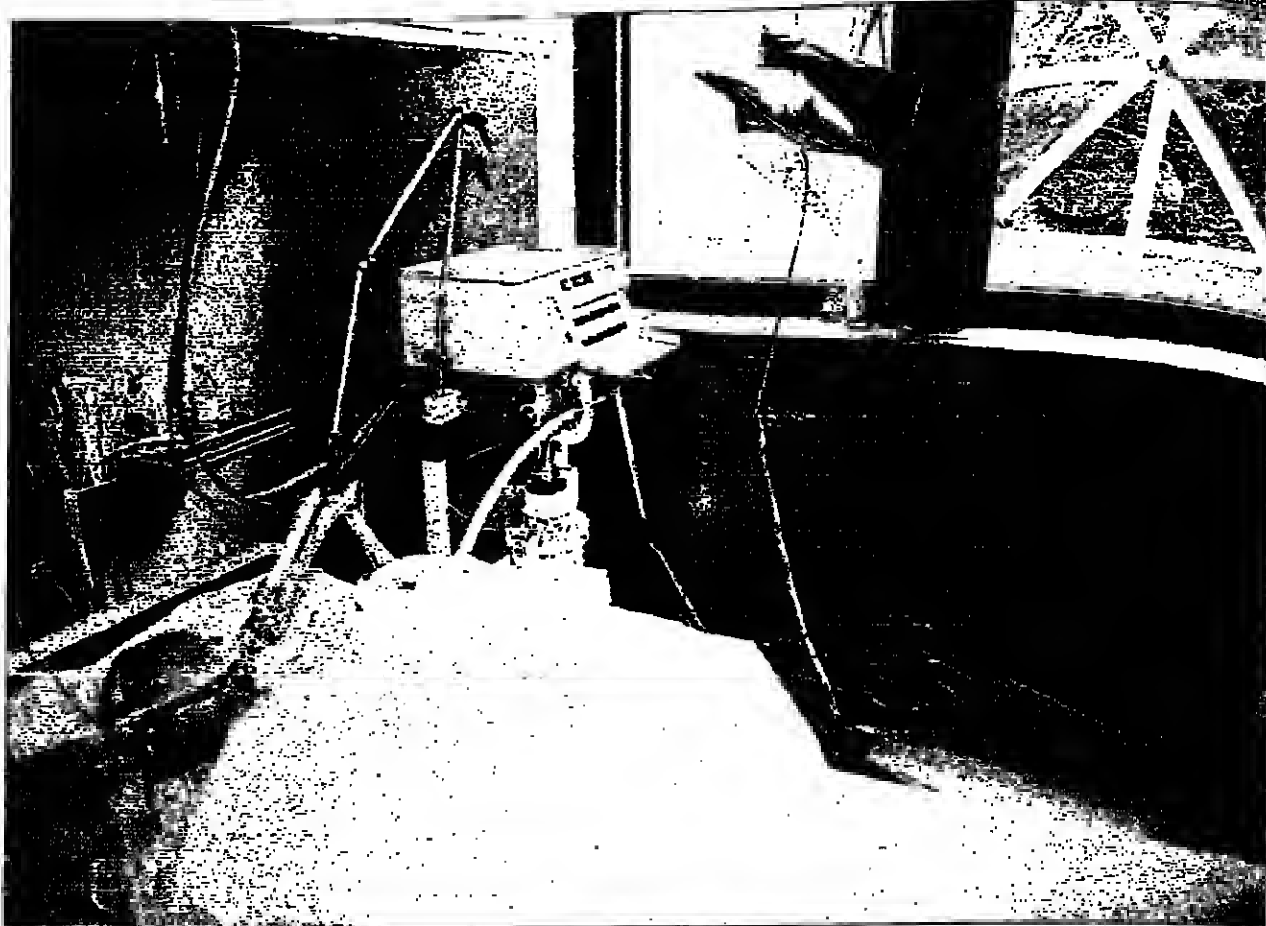
Bombing by Nato jets is inflicting more suffering on injured civilians, writes Tom Walker in Belgrade

THE doctor turned away from the row of beds and looked at us with a physician's knowing eyes. Ivan, 14, said Dr Nenad Markovic, would probably die. In the background, heart monitors intermittently beeped and ventilators and respirators helping to keep the seriously injured alive hummed.

One of Dr Markovic's fellow consultants, Dr Radoslav Svecic, stood at the foot of the bed and tried to reassure us that there was still hope. "Ivan, do you like Partisan?" he asked. Ivan shook his head. "What about Red Star?" Despite the tubes and drips, a smile creased his face at the mention of the football team

and there was a sparkle in his blue eyes. To Ivan's right were five beds all of whose occupants were in comas, all victims of Nato bombs. A small team of doctors and nurses struggled to save a patient in another room.

No one paid much attention to us, an inconspicuous group of journalists dressed in green theatre gowns and slippers, as we left the intensive care unit. Dr Markovic said he feared all six patients in Ivan's row would die; certainly, the teenager opposite, Zeljko Mitic



A patient in the intensive care unit damaged by a Nato attack. Others received cuts from flying glass and debris

ON OTHER PAGES

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In the lecture theatre, Dr Aca Jovicic, the director of the hospital and a neuropsychiatrist, made a few observations about behavioural patterns of Western leaders. "Those who did this knew there were sick people from all over the country here," he said, beneath a military shield, dating army medicine in Serbia to 1844. "Everybody knows the hypocrisy of America," he said. "What they have done is the dance of Satan, and the human world must stop this action. These rich countries have no culture but are ruled by psychopaths who are releasing their frustrations."

ferred head wounds from the debris. There would have been many more injuries had the staff not taped up the windows a night earlier.

"He has an acute myocardial infection and he now has bad head lacerations. It's a complex situation and he's drifting in and out of consciousness," said Dr Jovicic Lukic. He added: "We have many questions, but the only one we care about now is whether he will live or not."

On the 13th floor, one of the patients who was awakened by her bedside window imploding was Dragana Krstic, 23. A few hours earlier surgeons had removed a tumour from her stomach. Wheeled into a corridor, she faced the press jostling for space around her array of drips.

What would she say to the pilot of the jet, someone asked. "I could only wish for his child to have a day like I did," she said. "What did she think about Kosovo?" Her response was firm. "Kosovo is part of Serbia."

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Alliance fears a spy in its ranks

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN WASHINGTON

AMERICAN and Nato officials fear that a spy within the alliance may be tipping off Belgrade about when and where to expect airstrikes.

On at least three occasions Serb authorities have cleared people from target sites shortly before they were struck, raising suspicions that President Milosevic is receiving advance warning of some Nato attack plans, according to US news reports citing officials in Washington and Brussels.

General Wesley Clark, the Nato Supreme Allied Commander, did not rule out the possibility of espionage at a news briefing yesterday but he said that steps were being taken to stop secret military plans falling into Serb hands. "Nato remains very vigilant in terms of protecting the security of its operations, and we are taking all appropriate measures in that regard," he said.

Last week a Serb military barracks was evacuated when an urgent radio message was received ordering everyone out of the building "minutes" before the target was hit by Nato bombs, the officials told ABC television news.

Similarly, although Nato had given a warning that it might strike official buildings in the centre of Belgrade, the Serbian Interior Ministry was reportedly "buzzing with activity" on the night of April 1. The following night it was completely deserted when it was struck. While the building was still burning Serb police at the scene told local reporters the ministry had been "evacuated on time".

US officials are also said to be concerned that Serb police "suddenly" sealed off a bridge to traffic immediately before a Nato airstrike.

Any leakage of bombing plans would leave Nato planes vulnerable to the Serbian air defence system since an "ambush" could be laid for the attacking planes. Nato officials are said to have tightened security surrounding operational plans while a hunt begins for the nameless suspected spy, whose nationality is also unknown.

Only the most senior military planners in Nato would have access to the top secret bombing plans. "If there is such a spy, we are talking about a top-level individual," an official in Washington said.

BALKANS SUMMARY

Italian MPs vote to send troops

Rome: The shaky centre-left coalition led by Massimo D'Alema, the Italian Prime Minister, passed the first hurdle in a critical debate on Kosovo yesterday when the Senate voted to approve the sending of 2,000 Italian troops to take part in "Allied Harbour", the Nato humanitarian mission in Albania (Richard Owen writes).

But the resolution emphasised that the troops be used only in "logistical, humanitarian and health support roles", and ruled out "any military ground intervention" in Yugoslavia. The resolution faced a stormy passage in the Lower House, where Signor D'Alema's majority largely depends on Communist MPs vehemently opposed to the Nato air raids.

Russian convoy row

Belgrade: A Russian aid convoy arrived in the Yugoslav capital after a two-day diplomatic row with Hungary over its contents. The 68 lorries were blocked because they included eight fuel tankers which Hungary feared could be used for military purposes, so violating the United Nations Security Council arms embargo on Yugoslavia. Only four tankers were allowed into the country and Russia agreed to remove five armoured vehicles. (AFP)

War criminal jailed

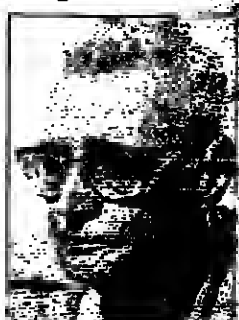
Sarajevo: This city's cantonal court jailed Goran Vasic, a Bosnian Serb arrested in a February 1998 "sting", for ten years for war crimes against civilians and prisoners of war during the Bosnia War. But lack of evidence meant Vasic was acquitted of the 1993 killing of the then Deputy Prime Minister, Hakija Turajlic, who was shot at a Serb checkpoint through the open door of a United Nations armoured vehicle. The prosecutor will appeal, seeking a harsher sentence. (Reuters)

Australian protest

Melbourne: Australia said it was seeking a visa for Malcolm Fraser, the former Prime Minister, to go to Yugoslavia and seek the release of two captured aid workers accused of spying. Alexander Downer, the Foreign Minister, said he was also summoning the Yugoslav Ambassador to deny allegations that Steve Pratt and Peter Wallace had been spying for Australia and to express deep concern about a trial they would face. (Reuters)

'King' backs bayonets

Johannesburg: King Leka, right, the exiled pretender to Albania's throne, said that Nato needed to send ground troops to Kosovo and that only self-determination for ethnic Albanians there would bring peace to the region. "You cannot hold ground by air power. The only way to hold ground is by a young 17-year-old with a bayonet," he said at his heavily guarded South African home here. (Reuters)



Vatican in pill protest

Rome: The Vatican criticised the distribution by United Nations agencies of the "morning-after" pill to raped Kosovo refugees. Archbishop Elio Sgreccia told Avenire, an Italian religious journal, that the pill acted to abort any foetus. Ethnic Albanian refugees have told of atrocities by Serb forces, including mass rape. The Vatican withdrew its contribution to Unicef after the pill's use during the 1992-95 Bosnia war when raped girls as young as ten risked pregnancy. (AFP)

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Strikes on bridges strangle supplies to Kosovo

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

THREE weeks ago General Wesley Clark, Nato's Supreme Allied Commander, memorably warned Belgrade that the aim of Operation Allied Force was to "systematically and progressively attack, disrupt, degrade, devastate and ultimately destroy those [Yugoslav] forces and their facilities and support".

Nearly 6,000 sorties and 1,700 bombing raids later, the Nato air campaign has succeeded, despite the poor weather, in inflicting a huge amount of damage to about 200 fixed sites, but the minimum of damage to mobile targets — Yugoslav Army, police and paramilitary units in Kosovo.

The attacks on Yugoslav troops in Kosovo began in the first week of Operation Allied Force at a time when the main focus was on destroying or disrupting the integrated air defence system. But each day, as the air campaign progressed at a steady rate, Nato officials had to admit that elements of the Yugoslav Army and Ministry of Interior Police were still operating effectively against the Kosovo Liberation Army.

While this was unfortunate for General Clark whose statement of intent on March 25 may have given the impression that the Kosovo troops' days were numbered, the American commander knew that the only realistic way to affect the operations of the forces inside the province — at

least during the initial stages of the campaign — was to attack other targets, many of them hundreds of miles away.

The town of Novi Sad, well to the north of Belgrade, has been hit almost as many times as Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. This is because it is the location of Yugoslav Army barracks, an oil refinery, strategic roads and bridges, all of which have a direct link to the operations in Kosovo.

The oil refinery has been hit several times, reducing, if not eliminating, its capability to turn crude oil into fuel for the tanks and armoured vehicles in Kosovo.

Similarly, the oil refinery at Pancevo near Belgrade has also taken many direct hits. The military would argue that the refineries' value for President Milosevic lay in their ability to support his war machine. Roads and bridges are, in military parlance, "lines of communication", and oil refineries are the lifeblood of an army in action.

General Clark's strategy, following well-practised rules, has been to try to strangle the arteries leading to Kosovo, cutting off supplies and supply routes to isolate the 40,000 Yugoslav Army and paramilitary troops.

In three weeks, according to General Clark's damage assessment yesterday, Nato bombers and Tomahawk cruise missiles have managed

to destroy 70 per cent of Yugoslavia's oil, petrol and lubricant stocks. The oil refineries at Novi Sad and Pancevo are probably beyond repair. In other moves to create a sense of isolation for the Yugoslav forces in Kosovo, Nato has succeeded in doing sufficient damage to the country's air defence system to force the troops to take cover because they know they can no longer rely on the Yugoslav Air Force or surface-to-air missile batteries to protect them.

General Sir Charles Guthrie, the Chief of the Defence Staff, said yesterday that more than 50 surface-to-air missile sites had been attacked, the majority of them destroyed. More than half of the Yugoslav Air Force's 16 MiG29s have also been destroyed, either in the air or on the ground.

Although General Guthrie and other commanders have been reporting each day that they have intelligence of rapidly deteriorating morale among the forces in Kosovo, the physical evidence is less reassuring.

Only occasionally has Nato been able to present evidence that the stranglehold strategy has produced results on the ground. For example, it was claimed that, at one stage, fuel shortages had immobilised the 549th Motorised Brigade, a Kosovo battle group, and that it had had to wait for fuel to arrive before it could move out of harm's way.

Although one of the reasons for the Yugoslav Army's present strategy of hiding from Nato bombers may be to preserve its dwindling fuel stocks, the unexpected incursion over the Kosovo border into Albania yesterday indicated that Mr Milosevic's forces are not yet so weakened that they are ready to give up military operations.

Strangling the forces in Kosovo is not General Clark's only strategy, although it is the one which ultimately will decide whether Nato's air campaign has been a success or failure. The wider strategy is to cause long-term damage to Mr Milosevic's military infrastructure.

The choice of targets bears this out. Although Nato is not providing a running total of every category of target hit, it can be estimated that more than 10 airfields, at least 20 army headquarters and facilities, 15 or so Ministry of Interior Police and security sites, and about a half a dozen factories which Nato insists had a military function, have been attacked.

Bridges will remain among the most sensitive of targets, particularly after the missile attack on the railway bridge

near Leskovac on Monday which hit a passenger train, killing ten people. Assuming that General Clark has many other bridges on his list of targets, the risk of civilian casualties will rise. Already up to 20 bridges have been hit. They include four in or near Novi Sad, a road and rail bridge at Kusiulija, and two others at Leskovac. Some of these were hit because they contained vital fibre optic cables, others because they were key routes for fuel lorries bound for Kosovo.

Figures are estimated. Many targets have been hit more than once.



Relics of Second World War hinder RAF's effectiveness

Outdated bombs frustrate Harrier pilots, writes John Phillips in Gioia del Colle

AN ANTIQUATED range of weaponry, including some equipment dating from the Second World War, has handicapped the fighting capacity of RAF Harrier GR7 ground attack jets during the three-week-old air conflict, military experts say.

The pilots of No.1 Fighter Squadron based at Gioia del Colle in southeastern Italy this week adopted new "cloud-busting" techniques, for the first time dropping free-fall 1,000lb bombs through bad weather that previously prevented them from hitting Serb targets without an unacceptable risk of inflicting civilian casualties.

But the latest attacks, deemed to have been successful, are believed to have been heavily dependent on guidance from SAS units on the ground who are identifying targets for the £20 million jump jets.

Such support may not be available later in the conflict and new weapons commissioned during the Gulf War to match the American air-fired cruise missiles are not expected to go into service for another two years.

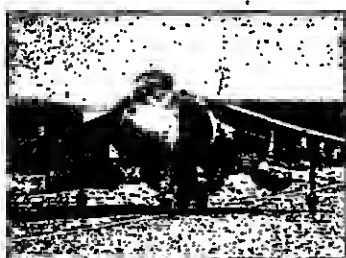
The RAF has not disclosed how many bombs it has dropped suc-

cessfully, but it has acknowledged that as many as 11 missions had to turn back because of cloud preventing them dropping laser-guided Paveway II bombs.

The weather cleared last week to allow them to drop cluster bombs for the first time. But the pilots' frustration is clear from the atmosphere in the Apulian bar where British pilots while away their time discussing tactics and drinking cocktails. Harrier pilots insist that their efforts are having an impact on the Serb military machine, inviting sceptics to consider how people at home would feel if similar raids were made on Britain.

The threat to their lives from Serbian anti-aircraft gunners when they are in the air means they have no time to be bored. "When you are operating in a live theatre you never have to motivate yourself," one Harrier pilot said. "We know that the Serbs are a very capable outfit. When you see Sam missile activity, it tends to keep you on your toes."

But it is clear that the pilots would welcome the new weapons: the Storm Shadow and Brimstone missiles would match the Ameri-



A Harrier at Gioia del Colle

can air-fired cruise missiles, which can be aimed in thick cloud.

Storm Shadow, which is being built by British Aerospace, is a long range stand-off attack missile that will combine pinpoint accuracy with effectiveness.

Also expected to be available for Harriers within two to four years is GEC Marconi's Brimstone missile, which will replace the BL755 cluster bomb to provide a lethal anti-armour capability while minimising the risk to attacking aircraft.

The cluster bomb entered RAF service in 1972. The standard 1,000lb Paveway II general purpose bomb has been in service since 1979. Some of these bombs have Second World War castings that have been repacked and are still in service, an RAF source said. The newer 2,000lb Paveway III is also available to the Harriers and

has been loaded on them but has not been dropped by them yet.

The prototypes of Storm Shadow and Brimstone are being tested and developed at RAF Boscombe Down near Bournemouth. RAF officers say that the test programme could not be speeded up even if more money was made available by the Government. But some analysts believe extra funding could help to widen the range of the Harriers more rapidly.

The RAF argues that it would be blinkered to judge the success or otherwise of its efforts by statistics alone. As one RAF source put it: "The idea is not to make Serbia cease to exist. The idea is simply to stop the humanitarian atrocities."

RAF sources say that a mistaken public perception of warfare has been created by films such as *Star Wars* in which the enemy is vaporised. In real combat where civilian casualties are unacceptable, there are different kinds of strike. "If you want to take out a tank, for example, you can take out its barrel so it can't shoot, take out its optics so it can't aim or take out its crew. You can take out its tracks or its engine to prevent it being used. You don't have to vaporise it."

However, if the introduction of new weapons is not accelerated, the RAF may see itself sidelined by the US Air Force.



The bridge and train at Leskovac, hit by "uncanny" accident

'Error' led to train bombing

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

NATO yesterday gave a detailed account of what it called the "uncanny accident" that led one of its pilots to hit a passenger train in Serbia with two guided bombs, killing ten passengers.

General Wesley Clark, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, said the pilot had launched his first laser-guided bomb several miles from the railway bridge over the river Morava at Leskovac on Monday. He steered it towards its target visually by remote control.

"As he stared intently at the desired aim-point on the bridge, at the very last instant he caught a flash of movement that was the train coming in. It was the last second. Unfortunately he couldn't dump the bomb at this time. He realised what had happened was that he had not hit the bridge, he had hit the train."

The pilot compounded the disaster by making a second approach to the bridge. "He aimed at the other end of the bridge... unfortunately at the last minute he realised the train had slid forward... by striking the other end of the bridge he actually caught the train."

The pilot and Nato regretted the loss of life, said General Clark. Belgrade has accused the allies of deliberately targeting the train.

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BALKANS WAR: THE REFUGEES

Serb soldiers using rape as tactic of war

BRITAIN yesterday accused Serb forces of systematically raping ethnic Albanian women as the first victims recounted horrific ordeals.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said that Serb security forces were using a barracks near the Albanian border for the repeated abduction and rape of Kosovan Albanian women and girls. Human rights officials said that the practice — a war crime — was being used to terrorise and destroy the community.

"We are now getting a pattern of repeated reports that young women were separated from the refugee columns and forced to endure systematic rape in an army camp at Djakovica, near the Albanian border," Mr Cook said.

The reports, from refugees fleeing into Albania, have taken time to emerge because of the women's reluctance to tell of their experiences. "It is a source of shame in their society as well as great shame on those who carry out such appalling crimes," he said, adding that the number of inde-

Elizabeth Judge reports on the desperate shame felt by Muslim women

pendent accounts gave the tales "a ring of corroboration". Several victims gave harrowing accounts of their ordeals yesterday. Many remained nameless, fearful of the stigma attached to rape in a mainly Muslim society.

One victim, "Drita", described how she and seven other women were separated from their families. Wringing her hands and speaking in faltering tones, she told a BBC reporter that they were gang-raped by Serbian soldiers and that four of the women were later killed. One was seven months pregnant.

She said: "They started to shoot everywhere and then they told us to leave the house.

Four of them were with masks. One was from my village, he started to hit me and the others. The captain told my father, your daughter is good for wife, for Serbian wife. One of them had sex with me, the other hit me, the others killed me."

In a voice racked with disbelief, she continued: "At that moment I thought God doesn't exist. I thought they wanted to kill me, but no. They didn't want to kill me. I wanted to kill myself. Nobody knows what really happened to me."

She added: "My friends think I am crazy when I scream at night."

An older woman from the same north Kosovo village alleged that soldiers separated women from their families and then raped ten by the roadside. "They said to the girls: 'You are beautiful. You are for me. We are not going to shoot you, but we want your families to see what we are doing.' They threw the girls to the ground, and then with their knives, they tore every part of their clothing," she said.



An ethnic Albanian boy queues for food at a refugee camp near Tirana yesterday. Aid workers have been hindered by banditry and feuding

An elderly man said that soldiers forced him to watch as a family member was raped in front of him. He said: "I have seen it with my own eyes. I couldn't move. I had a Serb soldier either side of me. They wanted me to see it."

Human rights groups said

that rape was being used as another way of destroying the ethnic Albanian community. Helen Bamber, Director of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, said: "Rape is being used as a weapon of war... It is not only the rape but the blatant

way in which it is taking place that is so disturbing. It is an attempt to destroy as much of the cohesion of the community as possible."

Investigators from the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague arrived in Albania to begin gathering evi-

dence. Silvia Miria, director of the Counseling Centre for Women and Girls in the Albanian capital, Tirana, has already amassed the testimonies of more than 100 witnesses to Serb acts of rape and sexual violence.

She said: "We are concerned

that systematic rape is a strategy of the Serbs just as it was a strategy used by the soldiers in Bosnia. It takes a great deal of courage to speak about it, but these women believe they have been victims not only of rape but of war crime. It is the only thing keeping them alive."

Battle spills into Albania after clashes on border

Thousands of Albanians flee frontier villages as Serb forces in Kosovo invade neighbour, writes Sam Kiley in Kukes



CLASHES on the Yugoslavia-Albania border escalated into a Serb invasion yesterday, sparking fierce fighting around two Albanian villages after five days of shelling.

The incursion by Serb forces followed a now-familiar pattern from Kosovo, including the burning of homes, and attacks on civilians. The Albanian Government denied there had been an invasion but the incidents are likely to stiffen the resolve of the Pentagon.

The Albanians had been ordered to resist Serb border provocations. Army bases have been set up several miles from where the Serbs have fired into Albanian territory. Yesterday Belgrade clearly intended to raise the stakes in the region by threatening Albania with war, after the Government has enthusiastically endorsed plans for 8,000 Nato troops to be sent here and called for an even greater number.

Serb forces yesterday took Kamenica, a hamlet close to the border, close to a key supply base for the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) after shelling it for several days. Petro Koci, the Albanian Interior Minister, said:

Local people fled the area, already plagued by banditry and a tradition of blood feuding among clans which had created severe difficulties for aid groups trying to help refugees as well as for Nato special forces soldiers trying to get into Kosovo to illuminate mobile Serb targets.

Yesterday morning the Albanian border police were attacked by Serbs who then charged into Albania supported by mortar and artillery fire. Between 3,000 and 4,000 people fled the area before the Albanian Army joined the battle. By yesterday afternoon, Albanian television said that the Serb forces had withdrawn across their own border.

Yugoslav generals and ministers have repeatedly warned all countries hosting the rebel KLA and Nato forces that they risk being attacked. There is no question that Albania, which has absorbed 314,000 refugees from Serb "ethnic cleansing" atrocities in Kosovo, has been giving the rebels a free hand to organise attacks on Serb positions from inside Albania.

Albanian artillery positions have been reinforced along its northern border with Kosovo.

But, so far, they have resisted the temptation to retaliate against Serb shelling. "We have seen the flames from the houses of Kamenica and Padesh, a small hamlet the area," said Pier Gonggrijp, an observer with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which monitors the border.

Artan Jakupi, an OSCE translator, said he saw his own house in Kamenica burning, along with several others. "I was expecting this to happen. They have been firing at us," he said.

The Interior Minister and observers said they thought that about 100 Serb troops took part in the invasion which came about five days after the KLA had tried to send about 600 men into battle in eastern Kosovo.

Aid agencies, Nato and the KLA are all extremely worried about the condition of up to 700,000 Kosovo Albanians still trapped in the region. Many are believed to be being used as human shields against Nato airstrikes on Serb infantry and armoured columns.

But the KLA has claimed that up to half a million refugees, most of them men who feared being murdered by Serb death squads, are living behind KLA lines and now face food shortages.

"There are many, many, who are starving to death. Our aim is to get in there and protect them. The Serbs are trying to stop us and that's why they are attacking inside Albania," said a KLA commander in Kukes yesterday.

Enervated by the Serb invasion, Pandeli Majko, the Albanian Prime Minister, held an emergency meeting with Luan Hajdaraga, his Defence Minister, and Aleks Andoni, the Albanian Army Chief of Staff, and pledged to co-ordinate a response closely with Nato which is setting up its headquarters in the Albanian Ministry of Defence.



MILISEVIC WILL PAY

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BALKANS WAR: ALLIED RESOLVE

Milosevic 'will pay in full for atrocities'

PRESIDENT Milosevic and his generals were warned by Tony Blair yesterday that they will be held responsible for any harm that comes to the half million Kosovo Albanians who have been driven from their homes but remain within the province.

In a Commons statement, the Prime Minister said that Nato's military action had a moral purpose as much as a strategic interest. The barbarity perpetrated on civilians in Kosovo, simply on the ground of their ethnic identity, could not be allowed to succeed. In a clear warning to Serbian military commanders that they could be tried for war crimes, Mr Blair said that Mr Milosevic's forces were continuing their "ethnic cleansing" but at a reduced level. "As a result of Nato action to date, the pace has significantly diminished," he said. "His tanks have to conceal themselves from Nato aircraft. His fuel supplies are running low. Many have sought refuge in the hills and forests of Kosovo. We are looking at all the options to assist them."

"Let me say this clearly: Milosevic is responsible for the welfare of those people. When we go into Kosovo finally, he will be held responsible for what we find."

Later, he added: "If he, or anyone else has committed crimes and the International War Crimes Tribunal indicts them as war criminals, we will pursue them in the same way we are still pursuing those people from Bosnia. We are

Philip Webster reports on Tony Blair's insistence to the Commons that the Nato offensive has a moral purpose

picking them up. They are being indicted and they are being taken to The Hague and we will carry on doing that."

Mr Blair said that the extra 1,800 troops were being sent to Britain "could be in a position to play our proper role in the effort to ensure the refugees are able to return to Kosovo in safety."

Mr Blair, reporting to a sombre House on military developments during the Easter recess, told MPs that the allied action would take time to succeed, but there could be no compromise in the battle to defeat "ethnic cleansing."

The Nato action appeared still to have backing on all sides of the House, although there were a few dissenters.

Mr Blair said that every day the

air attacks were causing further damage to "Milosevic's military machine".

He told those who had called for more negotiations: "We struggled for a year to find a solution for Kosovo by peaceful means, despite Milosevic's brutality on the ground. We intervened when the diplomatic avenue was exhausted and when the hideous policy of 'ethnic cleansing' was under way."

He described the difficulties of sending in any ground forces as "formidable". "In present circumstances, the potential loss of life among our servicemen and women, to say nothing of civilians, would be considerable."

But he added: "There can be no compromise on the terms we have set out. They must be met in full."

William Hague said that the Opposition continued to back the Nato campaign. He said that Mr Blair had rightly described Mr Milosevic as a dictator and spoken of the need for war crimes investigations, adding: "How does he view the likelihood of us now being able to negotiate a political settlement with Milosevic?"

Mr Blair said it was not a question of negotiating. "It is a question of him meeting the terms Nato has set out. And there will be no compromise on those terms. They will be secured in full."

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said he had yet to see evidence that Milosevic had been forced to do something he did not intend to do. "We have not yet forced him to take action."

"These operations," he added, "still have a long way to go. There will be setbacks, including casualties, among them no doubt unintended civilian casualties."

Martin Bell, the former BBC war correspondent and Independent MP for Tatton, said: "It is clear that we are in the presence of the greatest war crimes in Europe for more than half a century. Yet we continue to respond with air power and air power alone."

He challenged Mr Blair: "Is it not true that circumstances on the ground can only be changed by boots on the ground?"

Mr Blair replied: "I simply ask people who say that we should put in ground forces now to just reflect on what an undertaking that is."

Alarm over Russian ties

PREVENTING the West's links with Russia from collapsing has emerged as the critical issue of the Kosovo crisis, a committee of MPs has said (Roland Watson writes).

In a report published yesterday, the cross-party Defence Select Committee said the bombing of Serbia presented "the

greatest test of Nato's credibility since the end of the Cold War". The MPs urged Nato to maintain its dialogue with countries like Russia and Ukraine. They also stated that Nato is the only military organisation capable of "rapid and decisive action" on behalf of the United Nations. "This capability must not be jeopardised."



Madeleine Albright meets reporters after her Oslo talks yesterday

Moscow insists air war must end

By CHARLES BREMNER

RUSSIA and the United States claimed progress yesterday in joint efforts to end the conflict in Kosovo, but Igor Ivanov, the Russian Foreign Minister, insisted that the Nato air campaign must stop and Belgrade's consent was needed before any foreign forces entered the Serbian province.

After four hours of talks in Oslo, Mr Ivanov and Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, said they had "narrowed differences" in their approach to President Milosevic. The session produced no breakthrough in the allies' push to bring Russian pressure to bear on Mr Milosevic, but there was none of the acrimony of recent statements from President Yeltsin about the danger of a new world war.

The main sticking point was over a Nato force in Kosovo to protect the population. Mr Ivanov noted that Belgrade was refusing to consider the entry of any foreign troops without its assent. Moscow eventually could accept a UN presence in the province, he said, and with an eye to the Serbians, he added: "We are against any form of violence, irrespective of who is committing it."

MPs dig in for long and bloody battle

The ends are broadly agreed, but the means remain cloudy. Backing at Westminster for the Nato military action in Kosovo has increased since before Easter. Reports about Serb atrocities and the plight of the refugees have solidified support for the bombing campaign and for the Nato aim of securing the "unconditional and safe return of all refugees" protected by a Nato-led international force.

But doubts remain about how these objectives can be achieved, echoing similar concerns heard in Washington as Congress returned from a two-week recess.

In both London and Washington, legislators talk of shock among constituents about the harrowing pictures from Kosovo. But this is linked to uncertainty. After Congressional leaders met President Clinton, *The Los Angeles Times* reported "there is still no consensus in either party on such key issues as how long the air campaign should last, when ground forces should be sent and how much money Congress is willing to spend".

The mood in the Commons was subdued as MPs heard the first report from Tony Blair on Kosovo for nearly a fortnight. There was a general acceptance both of the necessity of the action and its probable length. Its opponents were still there — Tony Benn, Tam Dalyell, Alistair Mahon and, at his most contrary, Alan Clark. But they are clearly a minority. Even the hard-left Campaign Group is split, more so than during the Gulf War.

On the Tory side, Mr Clark apart, the pre-Easter critics were more muted and apparently more reluctant to rock the boat. William Hague was cautious, expressing general support and asking a series of probing questions on the aims, the Kosovan Albanian refugees and the role of ground troops, as a Leader of the Opposition should.

MPs reflected the public mood, since repeated polls have shown rising support for the air campaign.

If there is now more clarity about overall aims, and greater agreement about them, few MPs appear sure about how we get from here to there. Even if "ethnic cleansing" has not been stopped, the air campaign is clearly now damaging Serbian military capacity.



Peter RIDDELL ON POLITICS

'The aims are clearer, but few seem sure of how we get there'

To portray the issue as being for or against ground troops is a gross oversimplification. The choice is more subtle.

A land force invasion is still ruled out, even though many MPs regard that as inevitable — and the commitment of ground troops now has growing support in polls in Britain, the United States, Germany and France.

Mr Blair was insistent that "the difficulties of such an undertaking, in the face of organised Serb resistance, are formidable". Not only would the potential loss of life be "considerable" but "assembling such a force would take weeks".

Nato has talked of using ground troops only in a "permissive environment". But Mr Blair made clear that this does not mean reaching an agreement with Belgrade before troops can be deployed.

As Paddy Ashdown said,

there is a crucial distinction between using ground troops when the risks are permissible, which would be reasonable, and when President Milosevic permits them, which would not be acceptable. Mr Blair stressed that Mr Milosevic has no veto.

So with a further 1,800 British troops being sent to Greece and Macedonia, and the US expanding its forces, the option is being created of an intervention on the ground to protect the return of the refugees. This would be when Serb military capabilities in Kosovo have been reduced even further.

Mr Blair has freedom of manoeuvre and no deadline. There is now a sombre recognition that the conflict is likely to be lengthy as well as bloody and costly.

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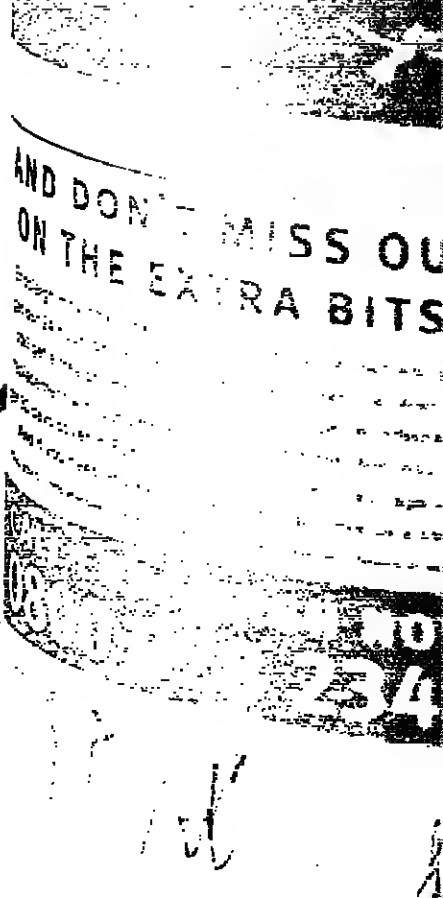
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The Woodhead 'conspiracy'

A trio of left-wing activists wants the Chief Inspector of Schools out.
Andrew Pierce reports

THE former wife of Chris Woodhead yesterday emerged from the shadows of a left-wing campaign to destabilise him and challenge the Prime Minister to dismiss him as Chief Inspector of Schools.

Behind Mrs Woodhead's carefully timed media offensive is a trio of experienced political activists. One of them, Kate Illingworth, who is a retired teacher and cousin of the veteran left-wing journalist Paul Foot, admitted yesterday that she was motivated by a political desire to topple Mr Woodhead.

"I have got an agenda against Chris Woodhead. He has humiliated the teaching profession. This is a good enough stick to use. It is a convenient stick," Ms Illingworth told *The Times*.

Few supporters of the Chief Inspector of Schools believe it was a coincidence that Mrs Woodhead made her debut on the airwaves as the House of Lords prepared to debate making it a criminal offence for a teacher to have a sexual relationship with a pupil. Until her intervention on the BBC Radio 4's *The World Tonight* on Monday night and yesterday's *Today*, Mrs Woodhead had restricted herself to one newspaper article and two newspaper interviews. Her left-wing teaching friends, former colleagues of the Ofsted chief at the Bristol school where he was teaching when his alleged affair took place, had made most of the running. They appear to have been motivated by a mixture of personal animosity towards Mr Woodhead, dating back to the staffroom, a desire for "the truth" to come out, and political dogma.

For 25 years Mrs Woodhead maintained a vow of silence about her husband's infidelity. Even when the *News of the World* revealed the first sketchy details of the affair three years ago she stayed silent for the sake of their daughter, according to an in-

terview she gave in last month's *Mail on Sunday*.

She has now gone public at a time when her ex-husband — the scourge of the teaching unions because of his ill-disguised contempt for the mediocre among the profession — is down and nearly out. Mr Woodhead, who was appointed by the Conservatives and kept on by new Labour, is fighting for survival.

Mrs Woodhead's foes portray her as a vengeful former wife desperate to destroy her former husband's career. Her supporters maintain she is a dignified woman whose patience has snapped after a quarter of a century of hurt.

The turning point for Mrs Woodhead was his widely reported remarks that it could be "educative and experiential" for teachers to conduct affairs with pupils. The comment reignited interest in his relationship with a former pupil, Amanda Johnston. The final straw was Mr Wood-

'There's an agenda. This is a good stick to use'

head's denial that the relationship took place when she was still at school — while he was allegedly telephoning his ex-wife and begging for her silence. Supporters of Mrs Woodhead insist she is neither hellbent on revenge nor seeking his removal from office over allegations he had lied about his relationship with the sixth-former. But the former wife raised the political temperature by making herself a public figure. "Telling the truth is one of the most important things we have," she said on *Today*.

"If I find that Mr Blair knows that he [Mr Woodhead] is lying, and is prepared to accept that, then I am afraid anyone who allows lies to be carried on cannot be trusted themselves. It is an incredibly important issue," she said.

Until Mrs Woodhead's appearance on the political stage her campaign had been conducted with the aid of smoke and mirrors and the assistance of leading members of Bristol West Labour Party. Ms



Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools, top, on his wedding day and, above, with Amanda Johnston: he denies having an affair with her while she was a pupil. Tony Robinson and Christine Purkis say he should quit



Illingworth, 62, a friend of hers for 25 years, has been particularly supportive.

Mr Woodhead was Ms Illingworth's head of English at Gorden School in 1974. She is one of five former teachers who have claimed that the affair with Ms Johnston had been an open secret there.

Ms Illingworth is a long-time Labour activist whose uncle is the former Labour leader Michael Foot and whose political heroes include Tony Benn; the former Cabinet minister represented a Bristol constituency before he was elected for Chesterfield. But Ms Illingworth has allowed her party membership

to lapse because she is disillusioned with the Blair administration.

She said that as a head of department Mr Woodhead "was pushy, a whizzkid, with progressive ideas — not what I would call them today. Chris Woodhead has been arrogant, overbearing, critical, and had a terrible effect on the teaching profession."

"He is lying over this affair but because of his high-handed manner he thinks he is above scrutiny. Paul said I discussed this in February. We both think it is astonishing he is still there."

The actor Tony Robinson, a friend of Mrs Woodhead, is

the second member of the triumvirate. He increased the pressure on the schools chief when he issued a detailed statement contradicting his version of events. Best known as Baldrick in *Blackadder*, the actor, a well-known Labour supporter, is a popular children's television presenter. He is a member of the Bristol West party.

The triumvirate is completed by Christine Purkis, who has not met Mrs Woodhead, but who gave the press details of Mr Woodhead frolicking in his underpants with sixth-form girls, including Ms Johnston, on a field trip in 1975.

"I have been waiting for a knock on my front-door from

the press for 25 odd years," said the retired teacher.

"We are all friends from the Labour Party. Tony is a big player. We are not a Chardonnay-sipping left-wing cabal who sit round a dinner-table plotting. But when it hit the papers there were many of us who thought: right, here we go. It was a terrible feeling when, having made the *News of the World* two years ago, it all fizzled out. He seemed to have got away with it. It's taken a long time. But now his position is untenable."

Mr Woodhead and Ms Johnston insist that their nine-year relationship did not begin until both had left Gorden.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Girl's naked body found in alleyway

The naked body of a girl aged about 17 has been found at Guildford, Surrey. Detectives began a murder investigation after a man on his way to work saw the body lying in an alley leading to lock-up garages opposite the Civic Hall. The only obvious signs of injury were grazes to the victim's face. Police sealed off the area as forensic scientists and officers with dogs searched for clues. As door-to-door inquiries began, police started to examine hours of security camera videotapes. The body was found a few hundred yards from the town centre's nightclubs and restaurants. Detectives appealed for anyone who was out on Monday night and may have seen anything unusual to contact them.

Dog-fight man jailed

John "Rustler" Parker, a leading figure behind organised dog fights in Britain, became the first person to be found guilty of involvement without being caught at the scene of a fight. Parker, 34, was jailed for four months and banned from keeping dogs for 10 years after being convicted of causing unnecessary suffering on the RSPCA's evidence of equipment and wounded dogs found at his home in Kexby, Lincolnshire.

Touchdown accident

A passenger was seriously injured and three were slightly hurt after the nose landing gear of an aeroplane collapsed after touchdown at Manchester airport, according to a report by the Air Accidents Investigation Branch. The 54 other passengers were uninjured in the incident in March last year. Passengers on the British Aerospace ATP, arriving from Southampton, escaped via the over-wing exits or from rear slides.

Rural cash machines

Cash dispensers linked to banks via satellite are to be installed in suburbs and rural districts. By the end of the year customers of all high street banks will be able to use more than 350 machines at Co-op stores, saving journeys and increasing trade for out-of-town shops. When a card is inserted, information is sent from a dish on the store roof via satellite to the customer's bank in a 100,000-mile round-trip that takes only seconds.

CS victim wins £7,000

A man has won £7,000 in damages for being assaulted by police with a CS spray. Kevin Missen, 21, was sprayed in the face in Liverpool in December 1996 as he looked into a police van to see his brother, who had been arrested for urinating in public. A charge of being drunk and disorderly against Mr Missen was dismissed by magistrates and he later sued Merseyside Police. Mr Missen said: "My eyes were not right for two weeks."

Burglar's calling card

A burglar was arrested for a string of thefts after he dropped his prison discharge papers at the first break-in. Richard Brown, 25, had been released from the prison ship *HMP Weare* in Portland, Dorset, but was quickly picked up after police found the papers, which included his photograph, name, age, description and previous convictions. Brown was jailed again for 21 months by Dorchester Crown Court.

Who could step into his shoes?

ONE of the points in Chris Woodhead's favour in his fight for survival is the absence of a natural successor as Chief Inspector of Schools.

In his four years at the helm of the Office for Standards in Education, Mr Woodhead has not brought in his "own" peo-

ple in the way that would be natural in the private sector. This means that the Government might be forced to look farther afield for a successor. Lord Haskins, for example, who runs Northern Foods,

would bring a strong managerial pedigree. John McIntosh, head of the private sector Centre for British Teachers, would maintain a critical approach. He also has experience of running a large national organisation, Shelter.

Less prominent candidates from the business world might include Pat Lee, head of retail training at Tesco and a member of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Mike Tomlinson, Mr Woodhead's deputy and the head of inspections, would be the natural caretaker in the event of a surprise resignation. But the 56-year-old chemist would not be a charismatic leader in the Woodhead mould.

Mr Tomlinson came to public attention as the leader of the emergency inspection of The Ridings School, in Halifax. But he blotted his copybook as a spokesman for the agency when, in an unguarded moment, he said he "did

not give a monkey's toss" about teachers' views.

A more probable candidate would be Anthea Millett, who heads the Teacher Training Agency and was Mr Tomlinson's predecessor at Ofsted. But, like many of the other possible candidates from within the education world, she could be seen as more sympathetic to teachers than Mr Woodhead and therefore likely to weaken the Government's "zero tolerance" approach in schools.

Susan Lewis, Chief Inspector of Schools in Wales, has shed her normally low profile in recent evidence to the Select Committee on Education. She would be at home running the similar English system.

In the past, the Post Office has been the main supplier of appointees to senior educational posts. John Roberts, the present chief executive, would appear to have more than enough on his plate, but who knows?

Blood and tears regime earns admiration

By JOHN O'LEARY

IF CHRIS WOODHEAD had to relinquish his post, his legacy would be a wealth of information on schools that would be the envy of other countries. But he would remain best known for his battle against the education establishment.

Since his appointment to head the Office for Standards in Education, he has waged a relentless campaign against sloppy teaching and bureaucratic incompetence.

He has sailed close to the political wind but, under two Governments, has always been able to rely on support in Downing Street. Many observers believe, however, that his standing has been so damaged by the continuing allegations of his former wife and past teaching colleagues that he will be unable to remain in the job for long.

After four years as Chief In-

spector, Mr Woodhead has driven through a programme of inspections that has won support from parents and even grudging acceptance from many teachers, but his talent as a communicator has ensured he and his organisation remain controversial.

Malcolm Wicks, who chairs the Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment, said recently that there were two Ofsted: one in which inspectors went quietly about their jobs and another "about blood and thunder and guts and tears".

This is the Ofsted likely to disappear without Mr Woodhead. Although that would be a relief to those in schools, it might not be welcome to a Government as anxious as its predecessor to maintain pressure on teachers for improved results.

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Shipyard sell-off puts thousands of jobs at risk

A TASK FORCE was set up last night to find new buyers for the Govan shipyard and other operations after the engineering giant Kvaerner announced a shake-up threatening 5,000 jobs.

The Norwegian firm put its Govan yard in Glasgow and engineering and construction operations in the North East and Sheffield up for sale. Lord Macdonald of Tradeston, the Scottish Business and Industry Minister, who used to work at Govan, hopes the task force can find a new buyer for the yard before orders run out in the summer.

Stephen Byers, the Trade and Industry Secretary, met John Fletcher, a Kvaerner director, last night to discuss what the Government could do to help with the sale of the English operations. "These are key manufacturing facilities which we need to secure for the future so that jobs can be protected," he said.

The sell-off is part of a worldwide review by the company after a period of severe losses. It will shed 25,000 staff worldwide. The firm announced it is to pull out of shipbuilding operations, putting yards employing nearly 2,000 people at Govan and Clydebank up for sale.

The task force, to be headed by Sir Gavin Laird, the former union leader, will seek an early meeting with the Ministry of Defence, which is expected to place a huge order for new roll-on, roll-off vessels later this year. Unions urged the MoD to bring forward the order to help Govan to attract a buyer. "Scotland needs engineering and manufacturing jobs. We simply cannot rely on call-centre, supermarket or burger bar jobs," Danny Carrigan, the Scottish regional secretary of the AEEU, said.

The Scottish National Party, which is now even more likely to win the Glasgow Govan seat in the Scottish parliament election on May 6, urged the Government to offer incentives to prospective buyers. A party spokesman said any package must be at least as attractive as the £150 million believed to have been made available to save the Rover plant in Longbridge.

If Govan does close later this year, it will be the latest victim in the dramatic decline of the British shipbuilding industry, which used to employ more than 200,000 workers in hundreds of yards in the 1920s but is now down to around 30,000 at less than 20 main centres. Lord Macdonald said he believed the yard had "considerable potential". He added: "It is now a modern, productive shipyard capable of building ships to the highest technical specification."

Labour appealed to the Scottish nationalists not to turn the closure into an election issue. But the SNP insisted that Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, must accept some blame. Nicola Sturgeon, the SNP Govan candidate who plans to meet shop stewards today, said: "Tony Blair's failure to visit Kvaerner during his recent visit to Glasgow gave the unfortunate impression that the Government was not giving top priority to the yard's problem."

Kvaerner is also reviewing its oil and gas operations in Aberdeen, London and Croydon, which employ a total of 1,600 people. Its fabrication yard at Methil, Fife, employing 315, is also under review.

Kjell Almiskog, president and chief executive officer of Kvaerner, said the company's decision was not a reflection on workers at Govan: "We are exiting Govan because we are leaving shipbuilding altogether," he said.

On the prospects of selling the UK shipyards, Mr Almiskog admitted the outlook was not promising. "We have to say that given the orders situation it is not going to be easy."

Ministers set up task force to find a buyer before orders run out at Govan, writes Jason Allardyce



Workers at Kvaerner's Govan shipyard going to meet management after they announced that it was to pull out of shipbuilding on the Clyde

1,500 workers in North East fear for future

BY PAUL WILKINSON NORTH EAST CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of workers in the North of England were also contemplating a bleak future after Kvaerner's announcement of plans to sell its British subsidiaries.

There are serious doubts over the long-term future of 900 workers at the Port Clarence offshore yard in Middlesbrough and 600 at Cleveland Bridge in Darlington, which helped to build the Severn and Humber bridges. Both of these Kvaerner sites are struggling to fill their order books.

Its two Davy Roll steel fabrication plants in Gateshead on Tyneside and Sheffield in South Yorkshire, which employ almost 1,000 workers, have also been put on the market but managers there are confident they can be sold as a going concern.

Kvaerner's other interests on Teesside, its Process and Metals division at Stockton and Redpath Engineering Services at Wilton, which together have 1,500 staff, are not affected.

At Port Clarence, which last year started building the Triton North Sea oil and gas platform, a spokesman said the plant "needs new orders urgently". He said: "It is likely one of the yards will have to be downscaled. Work on the Triton platform is guaranteeing jobs until the summer, but beyond that the future is uncertain."

Frank Cook, Labour MP for Stockton North, is angry that Kvaerner is voicing no concern for the Port Clarence workers. He said: "His explanation so far is couched in banker's speak, and nothing about how it will hit individuals." One 25-year-old worker at the yard said: "Everyone is worried about the future. We've all got mortgages and families and we just don't know what's going to happen."

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SNP to concede £2bn hole in budget

BY JASON ALLARDYCE SCOTTISH POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Scottish nationalists are to admit for the first time that an independent Scotland would have to live with a £2 billion hole in its budget.

The admission, to be made in an economic strategy paper to be published before the Scottish election on May 6, will reignite the debate over whether Scotland could afford to stand alone without being subsidised by English taxpayers.

The SNP is expected to claim that the shortfall between what is raised and what is spent in Scotland will be just under £2 billion in 2000-01 before moving into surplus.

Labour has used government figures to claim that an independent Scotland would run up a cumulative deficit of more than £15 billion over the next four years. But the SNP will argue that in relative terms, the Scottish deficit is smaller than the overall deficit for the United Kingdom. The total UK deficit stood at £32 billion according to the latest government figures for 1996-97 and the SNP will point out that Westminster has not needed to increase taxation sharply to tackle this.

The Scottish deficit was officially put at £7 billion in 1996-97, with total government expenditure of £31.8 billion as against £24.7 billion raised in revenue in Scotland. When North Sea oil and privatisation proceeds were taken into account, the figure was closer to £3 billion. Public spending was 23 per cent higher per head in Scotland than in England in 1996-97.

The SNP treasury team of John Swinney and Andrew Wilson will claim that the methodology used for official deficit figures was biased. They will say that as the UK moves towards surplus, so the Scottish deficit will shrink to around £1 billion in 2001-02 before Scotland moves into a modest surplus the year after.

The SNP also will argue that, under its calculation of Scotland's deficit, the country would still meet the qualification criteria for European Monetary Union.

The paper, entitled *An Economic Strategy for Independence*, will also point out that Professor Andrew Hughes Hallett, an adviser to the World Bank and a leading authority on the single currency, has agreed that an independent Scotland could join economic and monetary union. SNP sources say they have deliberately used worst-case scenarios to calculate the figures.

NHS lists 'longer' under Labour

AVERAGE NHS waiting lists in Scotland under Labour are 5 per cent higher than during the Tories' final five years, a study claimed yesterday. Independent research by the City accountants Chantrey, Vellacott, DFK shows the average waiting list in the Conservatives' final five years was 81,568 while the average in Labour's first two years is 85,486.

The research also claims a 25 per cent increase, between March 31, 1997 and September 30, 1998, in the number of people who did not receive an initial hospital appointment within the Scottish Office target of nine weeks from the date of GP referral. Only after the initial consultation prescribes further treatment - in around 50 per cent of cases - do patients join the "headline" waiting list.

Salmond under fire

A teenager questioned Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, on his controversial condemnation of Nato's air attacks on Serbia during an election walkabout. Kenneth Millan, 17, said he thought Mr Salmond had been "insensitive". The party leader spent several minutes explaining his views in Livingston, West Lothian. Afterwards Mr Millan said: "I think he had a valid point but it might have been a sore time to put it. The whole country thought he was a bit insensitive." Mr Millan said he backed attacks on military targets but was worried about civilian casualties.

Drugs head to head

A drugs counsellor and former Scottish Woman of the Year is to stand against Sam Galbraith, the Health Minister, to highlight a drugs crisis. Maggie Richards, 62, named woman of the year in 1994 by a Glasgow newspaper for her work with addicts, said Mr Galbraith had ignored advice on the problem, including warnings of a heroin epidemic. The former teacher, from Bearsden, Glasgow, will compete with Mr Galbraith for Strathkelvin and Bearsden seat. She said: "Children are dying on Scotland's streets and the Government seems to be allowing it to happen."

Councillor bites back

An enthusiastic Scottish nationalist is back on the campaign trail after suffering a bad case of a dog biting the hand that pleads. Margaret Murray, a Cumbernauld councillor, had the top of her finger bitten off by a dog two days ago as she popped a campaign leaflet seeking support for local SNP candidate Andrew Wilson through a door. After receiving treatment in the accident and emergency ward at Monklands Hospital, the stoical politician, who has been dubbed "The Terminator", was working as hard as ever yesterday.

QUOTE of the day
Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, claiming an SNP government would, like Quebec, hold referendum on independence if elected in May:
"It would mean a Scottish neverendum."

AGENDA
Today: Labour's Henry McLeish will visit St Stephen's School in Glasgow which runs an anti-drugs initiative. The Liberal Democrats will unveil their party election broadcast in Edinburgh, while the Conservatives will look at the economy. Nicola Sturgeon of the SNP will be talking about education. Alex Salmond will be campaigning in Stornoway.

Inside Section 2
Passing the buck on pollution
Buy Clark Gable's old home
Homes, page 32

Film chic on drink

Police pay £30,000 to settle abuse claim



Cinema is ordered to stop breaks that give customers a breather at the bar, reports Paul Wilkinson

"We have asked the Penistone cinema to observe the terms of its licence that it cannot have an interval during the feature film.

"Even in the old days they had a B-film first followed by the main feature. They didn't stop the feature film halfway through."

"We have asked the Penistone cinema to observe the terms of its licence that it cannot have an interval during the feature film.

"Even in the old days they had a B-film first followed by the main feature. They didn't stop the feature film halfway through."

Good old days: queues and intervals

Most films run for about two hours allowing cinemas to squeeze in up to four performances a day.

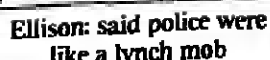
By RUSSELL JENKINS, NORTH WEST CORRESPONDENT

He complained that in October 1992 he was ambushed by police officers and bundled into a van where he was kicked in the groin and bantered over the head. When he asked what was going on, he said, one officer told him: "You are going to die, you black bastard."

Mr Ellison said: "It was like something out of a film about the Deep South. One policeman then took me by the

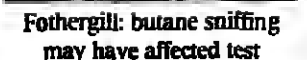


Ellison: said police were like a lynch mob



BY PAUL WILKINSON
NORTH EAST
CORRESPONDENT

The court was told that she was seen by police driving erratically in Tingley, West Yorkshire, and after a roadside breath test she was arrested and taken to a police station, where she was tested again. This produced a read-



Mr Clapham, for Fothergill, said that she had been under pressure because her grandmother had died, her partner had left her and fertility treatment had failed. He said her GP had advised her to attend an addiction clinic. The case was adjourned until May for reports.

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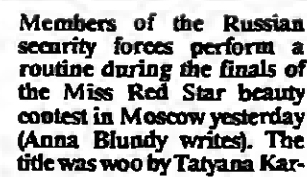
* Shows not on open Sundays

* Showrooms not open Sundays

Only two safety drills had been carried out in the tunnel since it was opened in 1965, the

It was not until 11.15 am that the Italians tried to disperse the smoke using an automatic extractor which failed to work.

M. Gayssot said he expected it would be "many long months" before the tunnel was reopened.



penko, 24, a paratroop warrant officer, pictured third from right. All the contestants were members of the

as nurses, radio and telephone operators or secretaries. There are around 1,000 female officers but only four colonels. No woman has ever attained the rank of general.

Tokyo: A man has been arrested for allegedly smuggling more than 40 Thai women in suitcases on flights to Japan. The Thai reportedly paid Toshiro Oyama's organisation more than £17,000 then boarded flights as passengers and were crammed into suitcases in the toilet. (AP)



"Files of my shoes and boots came pouring out," Ms Maples said. "I was just so hurt. They just came flooding out. They were slashed. That struck me as very aggressive and angry."

Mr Jones, 56, who was Ms Maples's press agent before she married Mr Trump in 1993, is defending himself on charges of burglary and criminal possession of stolen goods. He claims that Ms Maples sometimes used to sleep at his office to avoid the press and had left the shoes and clothing behind.

NEXT WEEK

Mar

Is the brain just a copying machine?

The theory of memes — copying ideas or skills — suggests that imitation has a key role in evolution. Anjana Ahuja reports

Cast your mind back to this morning when you were lying in bed listening to the radio. Has anything that you heard lingered in your mind? The catchy Flat Eric song featured in the Levi's ad or a particularly limp pun proffered by the DJ? Or have you been mulling over the grim bulletins about Kosovo?

These items are not merely snippets of information that we lock away in our heads, according to Dr Susan Blackmore, senior lecturer in psychology at the University of the West of England in Bristol and author of *The Meme Machine*. They are examples of "memes" — ideas, inventions, skills or stories that get passed from one person to another. We copy or imitate one another in myriad different ways, and the things that we copy are the memes.

Religion is a particularly prevalent collection of memes (known as a memplex), usually spread by parents, who are excellent meme machines. They show their children how to tie shoelaces, how to greet people, how to eat with a knife and fork. Blackmore boldly suggests that it is this capacity for imitation that sets human beings apart from their ancestors, why the human brain evolved to be unusually large, and why culture plays such an important role in our lives.

"People assume that we evolved an enormous brain because it was of benefit to our genes," says Blackmore. "For example, it made us better hunters or foragers. But there are other animals that hunt and forage with much smaller brains. And there is a high price for having a large brain — childbirth is difficult and large brains consume a lot of energy. I propose that as soon as early human beings started imitating, things changed."

Conventional evolutionary theory suggests that the human brain swelled as humans became social

creatures. Blackmore says that the social skills evolved because they were needed for imitation.

Imitation allowed early human beings to make tools by copying someone else rather than learning from scratch. Copying the eating habits of someone who has worked out what is safe to eat is less perilous than finding out by trial and error. In this way the best human imitators had an advantage. Genes that conferred the ability to imitate won out over a few million years, the human brain developed rapidly into a copying machine.

The most successful memes — the skills and ideas that are copied most frequently — are those related to survival. "The Internet is an excellent way of spreading memes, and the most popular subject on it is sex," Blackmore notes. Science and religion persist because they appeal to our need to explain our origins.

The idea of memes dates back to 1976 when Richard Dawkins was propagating the idea of the "selfish gene" which, the Oxford University biologist contended, was merely one example of a replicator. Just as genes get passed around, ideas and beliefs and habits — which he christened memes — get passed on too.

Such memes fit into an evolutionary system which mirrors that of genes. Genes are subject to heredi-

ty, variation (they change as they pass through generations) and selection (not all genes get passed on). In the same way, Blackmore argues, a skill or idea can be inherited. It can vary as it is transmitted, and people do not pass on everything they hear, read or learn.

The science of memes can, Blackmore claims, explain why creative professions, which are good at spreading memes, are deemed more sexy than others. Artists, thinkers, writers and musicians can be thought of as talented imitators, with their creativity and innovation a natural by-product of their gift for imitation. That is why Gerard Depardieu and Mick Jagger, who are not every woman's idea of male perfection, appear to be highly desirable to the opposite sex.

This idea apparently resolves an enigma — evolutionary theorists have been hard-pressed to explain why art and music have evolved, and why their exponents are so revered.

Blackmore's serious treatment of this controversial idea has earned a mixed response. Dawkins, who penned the foreword to *The Meme Machine*, admires Blackmore for developing the theory of memes but has not stated whether he subscribes to her belief that memes shaped the human mind.

"I think he thinks I have gone too far," she says, laughing. The paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould has called memes "a meaningless metaphor".

Blackmore replies: "If I was saying, 'Look at genes, aren't they successful? Memes are the same and aren't they wonderful?' then people would be right to say it's just a metaphor. But that's not what I'm saying. There are a million differences between genes and memes. The only similarity between them is that they are both replicators, and once you get replicators you have evolution."

"Now that I've seen it, it is so obviously true. Things are copied by us, and these things compete for space in our brains."

The philosopher Mary Midgley, based at Newcastle University, says that reducing humans to mere vehicles for the propagation of memes and genes is morally impoverishing: "What upsets people is that once we realise we are a product of these two replicators, genes and memes, we are forced to drop the idea of 'the self', and people don't like this idea that there is no soul and no spirit."

Blackmore points out that the lack of "a self" is also a tenet of Buddhism, which she practises. Does the inclusion of her beliefs devalue her scientific argument?

"I struggle with the same questions in my science as I do in my personal life," she says. "When I practise Zen, I have to ponder ridiculous questions such as 'What is this moment?' But these are the same questions that science is trying to answer. I don't think science has a heart if we don't relate it to the way we live our lives."

● *The Meme Machine* is published by Oxford University Press (£18.99) and is available to Times readers for £15.99; telephone 0990 134459.



Dr Susan Blackmore

Slow progress in care for cancer

IN CANCER research, success is always just around the corner. Despite the billions spent on research, and frequent headlines about breakthroughs, cures have not been found, and even the more modest objective of extending life has proved elusive.

Dr John Bailar of the University of Chicago has long courted unpopularity by pointing this out. Two years ago in the *New England Journal of Medicine* he noted that while there have been improvements in treatment, the effects on life expectancy have been small and that age-related deaths from cancer are barely declining. Between 1970 and 1994, which included President Nixon's "War on Cancer" — mortality actually rose by 6 per cent in the United States. "Seriously disappointing" is how he describes the past 40 years of research into the treatment of cancer.

Last week Dr Bailar was joined by

Professor Barnett Rosenberg of Michigan State University, who in the Seventies discovered the curative powers of platinum-based drugs such as cisplatin. For once the word cure can be properly used. Cisplatin can cure almost 100 per cent of testicular cancers, and results to be published this week in the *New England Journal* show that when combined with radiotherapy it can cut deaths from cervical cancer by up to 50 per cent.

These are marvellous results, and Professor Rosenberg, now retired, is "euphoric" about them. But he is also concerned. Cisplatin was discovered more than 25 years ago yet remains the most effective



SCIENCE BRIEFING
Nigel Hawkes

cancer, is another candidate, but it is hard to disagree that returns from so much research have so far been scanty. This week's meeting of the American

Association for Cancer Research in Philadelphia, which ends today, added yet more studies to an archive already groaning with information. Among the most interesting was evidence presented by AstraZeneca that the latest fashion in cancer therapy, anti-angiogenesis, may be worth pursuing. The idea is to starve a tumour by cutting off its ability to create blood vessels. Dr George Blackledge, head of new cancer projects at the company, presented data showing that a compound known only as ZD4190, tested on five different animal species and on several tumour types, slowed growth of the tumours.

The compound can be taken by mouth — a big advantage — and Dr Blackledge is "very enthusiastic" about it. Clinical trials in human patients should start in Britain and the United States this year.

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Plagued by a puzzle

A GROUP of 160 corpses unearthed during construction work in Athens could answer a longstanding puzzle: what disease caused the plague that killed 100,000 Athenians, including Pericles, in 429BC?

Historians have made many guesses, but the most plausible, says David Durack, a consulting professor of medicine at Duke University, is typhus. This disease fits the symptoms described by Thucydides, a survivor. Dr Durack told a conference earlier this year at the University of Maryland. Rash, blindness and the loss of organs because of gangrene fit the diagnosis. So does the time taken for the victims to die. Typhus is caused by *Rickettsia prowazekii*, a pathogen that has had its entire DNA sequence worked out. So the corpses, which date from the right period, could contain matching DNA.

The chances of extracting the DNA may not be high, admits Professor Robert Littman of the University of Hawaii, a specialist in ancient medicine, but it is probably the only way to test the theory.

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THE glass mirrors of large optical telescopes require grinding and polishing of exquisite precision, which makes them very expensive. Now a group of astronomers from Laval University in Quebec suggests that mirrors up to eight metres in diameter could be made more cheaply of metallic liquids. The liquid would be

placed in a spinning platter and be deformed to produce a perfect parabolic shape. The problem has been that such a mirror, using mercury as the liquid, would work only when pointing upwards, which made it unattractive.

Cheaper peeper

placed in a spinning platter and be deformed to produce a perfect parabolic shape. The problem has been that such a mirror, using mercury as the liquid, would work only when pointing upwards, which made it unattractive.

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THE TIMES

SCIENTISTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

Why do some people find cartoons and soap operas as challenging as mental arithmetic? On Wednesday April 28, in *How the Brain Reads the Mind*, Dr Francesca Happé from the Institute of Psychiatry will discuss how autism has come to be regarded as a form of "mind-blindness." She will also show how our brains allow us to guess what others are thinking.

The lecture will be chaired by Professor Susan Greenfield, Director of The Royal Institution. Members of the audience will also be able to ask questions.

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A rift? There is no rift



New Labour, new life: Lauren Booth, half-sister to Cherie Blair, has found the family connection useful

Lauren Booth is the poor relation whom we all expected to get rich on the back of her half-brother-in-law, Tony Blair, and her half-sister Cherie Blair (with whom she shares a father, the actor Tony Booth). She's 31, lives in a shared rented flat on the periphery of Muswell Hill, in North London, and her most impressive possession is a maroon G-reg Escort convertible with leather bucket seats. If she has traded on the family connection — which most people would agree she has — then so far she hasn't got a very good price for it.

Perhaps that could be about to change. Having subsisted for the past couple of years on a series of columns (*Evening Standard*, *New Statesman*, but not *The Sun*, which rebuffed her agent), she has landed a job presenting her own Channel 5 show, *My Secret*, has a confessional format, with "ordinary people" dropping bombshells about themselves to their nearest and dearest. She's thrilled about the whole thing. This is clear from the moment she opens the door, clutching a bowl of muesli (it's 8am) and smiling manically. She's 5ft 11in, and looks a bit like an overgrown Jane Horrocks, with the same jagged, upturned smile. Blade-thin except at the hips, there's something slightly off-centre about her — in more ways than one.

She leads me into the kitchen, where she peers through a side-window to see if her flatmate's curtains are closed — "Damn, he's got the radio in there, and I want to listen to the *Today* programme." This is an odd thing to say when I have just arrived to interview her, but I let it go. She resumes her breakfast, telling me about her new show between mouthfuls. "It's a great slot because it's 7pm, which is a new slot for Channel 5."

"It's a fun show," she goes on. "We want lots of laughs — that's why they got me. When I do the *BBC Breakfast News* [a newspaper review slot], everybody says, 'Oh my God, I don't believe she said that!'"

This is a common reaction to Lauren Booth. Similar words have probably been uttered within No 10. Since the general election, Lauren has dropped a series of little bombshells, which have caused slight embarrassment to her famous relatives. In truth, her incendiary devices should have had greater force, but they have been deployed a little randomly.

There was the anti-hunt speech she made at the 1997 conference; the diary column in *The Spectator* where she referred to herself as a

Lauren Booth strongly denies that her activities have strained her links with the Blairs. Interview by Grace Bradberry

"Valkyrie-like goddess" and to Tony Blair as her "charming, Mar-mite-sandwich-making brother-in-law" who changed into "Our Leader"; most recently she wrote an article for *Tribune* praising Ken Livingstone and suggesting the Labour leadership should drop its opposition to him running for mayor. The following day, Livingstone declared that Blair was "worse than Mrs Thatcher", thus underlining her disloyalty. Did she not think she'd gone too far?

"I think disagreement is healthy," she says defiantly. Not very new Labour, I remark. "They are certainly a strong enough party to withstand someone with a point of view," she pronounces. Wasn't she at least taken aback by Livingstone's Thatcher remark? "God, it's not my business to know what Ken Livingstone is going to say from one day to the next," she says, laughing. She is clearly rather proud of the answers she is giving. The trouble with Lauren Booth, however, is that she is as transparent as a wet T-shirt in competition. The facts of her adult life are these: she went to drama school, became an actress, struggled to make a good living. Towards the 1997 election, she got involved in Arts for Labour, based at John Smith House. She abandoned acting altogether just before the election, went up to Sedgfield for the count, went to the party at the Royal Festival Hall, then promptly relaunched herself as a journalist after gaining a media agent at about the same time. Rarely has there been a more brazen attempt to cash in on a relative's success, but Lauren spins and spins, refusing to let this stick. "It was chance, the way I look, the way I am. You know, people are going to recognise that," is how she explains the Lauren Booth post-election phenomenon.

It's a shame, because I have every sympathy with her opportunism. She hadn't had an easy life, and deserved a break. The new Labour ticket was it. Why not cash it in? If only she would acknowledge this we could all move on. Born Sarah Booth (she adopted Lauren as a stage-name), she and her sister Emma are the products

of Tony Booth's relationship with Pamela "Suze" Smith, a Sixties model. Their father drank.

When Lauren was 12, her mother locked the door on a drunken Booth and he accidentally set himself on fire. Lauren tried and failed to unbolt the door, hearing his shouts but unable to help. Her father was in hospital for months and it was during that period that Lauren first got to know Cherie Blair and discovered that the woman she'd met several times before was actually a half-sister.

Tony Booth never came home again. Lauren and Emma were sustained by their grandmother who literally brought food parcels, and had the girls to stay at weekends. Eventually, Lauren moved in with her grandparents, before gaining a place at drama school. During that period, she was a frequent dinner guest at the Blair household.

So in many ways Lauren Booth is a survivor. She spent her teenage years staying out until 3am, drinking Jack Daniels and hanging out with other scarcely cared-for offspring of bohemian parents. The legacy of this is that Booth is an accomplished "mucker". She can make friends in

bars, pick up mates at Labour conferences, work her way into the centre of things. "I'll go up to someone and say, 'So, when are you having this party? I'm coming along!'" This was pretty much her approach to new Labour as the election grew closer — but it proved difficult to get in on this particular party. She worked for Arts for Labour, but as she says, "All the big people, come the general election, Millbank were in control of them. They sort of shunted them away from us. You can't have any old bod like me calling Mick Hucknall."

She's brought up that name, so I take the plunge: is it true you went out with him? "Well, not romantically, but I did go for two nights out with him. I was really, really annoyed that we didn't have an affair. I was too shy."

With scarcely a pause, she goes on to describe how she got to meet the Simply Red singer in the first place. "I saw him at the first big gala event after we won the elec-

tion. I was a big fan and I went up and started singing." She spreads out her arms and dances towards the sink as she re-enacts this scene.

"Months later — I don't know whether I bumped into him, or whether I had his number from the... The Labour Party's contact book, she may have been about to say. "...anyway, I rang him up and said, 'It's me, I sang in front of you at conference!'" They had dinner, went to see Eddie Izzard, visited him backstage, but that was it.

Generally speaking, this appears to be Lauren Booth's modus operandi. At the Parliamentary of the Year Awards, sponsored by *The Spectator*, she spotted Alan Clark across the room, and suggested they had lunch. He agreed — but didn't set a date. Did it ever happen? "I didn't." Perhaps he was too busy — or perhaps Clark saw trouble stamped on Lauren Booth's forehead.

Throughout the interview she regales me with more tales of how she went up to this person, that person, said such and such, and they were first aghast then amused, in an indulgent sort of way. She relies, you might say, on the amusement of strangers. In the corridors of LBC she bumped into Ken Livingstone, and said, "Oh my God, you are Ken Livingstone," to which he apparently replied, "I would never have the gall to speak to someone, an elder, the way you just did." "I went, 'Oooh, you're very grand.' He went, 'You're funny.' Now they have dinner. 'That's nothing political. It's just two people who like a glass of wine and can laugh."

When did she join the Labour Party? "I don't know. Probably eight, nine years ago. I don't know. Recently. Who knows." This is a very odd reply. Lauren Booth has spent much of her life on the periphery, trying to reach the centre. She tells me she likes to hear the crew talking through her earpiece when she's on set, otherwise she might feel left out. I ask about her relationship with her father, and she says: "Dad's got a new family now, he's remarried, and he's got a group of kids around him. He's a family man of the moment, and he's got that family. I don't see him a lot."

When I ask whether her activities haven't strained relations with the Blairs she insists: "There's no rift. There's no rift." But she won't say the last time she visited No 10. This week, she's off to Labour's gala dinner — at the invitation of Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport.

● *My Secret* is on Channel 5, Monday, 7pm, beginning April 19.

Here, the breakfast hours are aching to be filled

Friday: "Oh George Stephanopoulos is so over," groans Nadia when I try to interest her in a power breakfast where the President's former aide will be in conversation with Walter Isaacson, the Editor of *Time*. Peter, of course, has scoffed at the idea of a meeting that starts at 7.30am. And in London, it's true, nothing would have persuaded me to attend a breakfast lecture. But here, the hours from 6 to 9am are viewed as time aching to be filled, and not just by joining the early-bird run around the Central Park reservoir.

The tradition of the literary breakfast was started here by Harry Evans in his days as publisher of *Random House*. His 8am breakfasts, held at Barneys department store, where the literary would argue about Proust over their pastries, were scrapped after his departure. Now the baton has been picked up by the 92nd Street Y, the famous arts and sports centre on the Upper East Side which, responding to demand, has just started its own Books and Breakfast series.

It's my first visit to this Manhattan institution and as I arrive at 7am dozens of people are filling out from the gym, their dawn workout already done. Outside the main door it's like a theatre as the crowd stands clutching tickets and waiting for friends. Breakfast with George was sold out weeks ago and a stream of disappointed young women are being turned away at the door.

On the second floor the Buttenwieser lecture theatre has been transformed into a smart restaurant with 25 tables each laden with fresh flowers, goblets of freshly squeezed OJ, baskets of warm muffins, and bagels with cream cheese and smoked salmon. Seating is free-range so I plump for a central table. "Have you been to one of these breakfasts before?" I ask the fortysomething woman sitting opposite me.



Joanna Coles NEW YORK LIFE

"Oh yes, these definitely work for me," she says briskly. "My concentration is better at this time. Now I'm a little hungry. What've we got here?" Her fingers hesitate above a decadent chocolate muffin before diving for a chaste bagel. "Put it this way, I'm a working person. If I go to a lecture between 8 and 10pm, then my evening's shot. 'This way I squeeze something extra into my day.'"

"I think it's a terrific idea," says her companion with a nod, helping herself to a bowl of swollen mulberries with chunks of fresh coconut and melon. "I came to the Jimmy Carter breakfast and it was a perfect way to start my day. Hey, in 90 minutes I'll be at my desk but I figure I got a head start on everyone else!"

At 7.35am George and Walter slip on to the small stage. "Hello Mr and Mrs Stephanopoulos," says Walter, waving to George's parents, who are loyally munching muffins at a backstage table. They wave a stage-side nod to a Greek Orthodox bishop, but

bad boy," he whispers proudly when he returns to his seat.

On stage Stephanopoulos rattles through his time with the Clintons in the tones of a wounded lover. "Bill Clinton is just about the most seductive person you can meet," agrees Isaacson. "You feel like he's part of a magic force field. He makes me feel as if I'm his best friend. It's enticing."

"Which means that you get extra hurt and extra betrayed when it goes wrong," says Stephanopoulos bitterly. In front of me a smart woman pulls out a laptop from a Kate Spade bag and starts pounding away at her keyboard. "Now that's annoying," says her neighbour, complaining loudly in a vigorous New York kind of way. Across the table a man and an attractive woman swap business cards with the discreet dexterity of seasoned couplers. "Any questions?" asks Walter, opening it up to the rest of us. Hands strain but my neighbour, Russ Smith, leaps to his feet first. "George, what did you think of the New York Times reviewer who called you a whiner?" "I heard about the review in advance," says George. "And when I bought the paper I folded the Book Review in half and threw it away."

Finally, we address the question exercising New Yorkers most: is Hillary going to run against the Mayor for the Senate? George thinks not. "Everything would be dredged up again; you mustn't underestimate how much she wants to do something on her own."

Four minutes later and the hall is empty, everyone on their way to work. "Will you come back for another one?" I ask my female neighbour as we squeeze into the elevator. "Look, it's only 8.40am," she says, "and I've already had great intellectual stimulation. It's a nice short format and you get to meet people. Would I come again? Go figure."

George's parents are loyally munching muffins at a table

A stream of young women are being turned away

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Culture v Anarchy, in the UK

Englishmen must learn how to
be gentle, says Roger Scruton

The most important issue in the forthcoming elections to the new Scottish parliament is Scotland. Whether by conscious design, or by the working of that "invisible hand" which the great Scottish philosopher Adam Smith discerned in all spontaneous co-operation, Scotland will sooner or later become an independent state. It will retain formal links with the United Kingdom; but it will have as much, and as little, sovereignty as any other state in the European Union. Its independence will come about more smoothly than that of the emerging Balkan states. For Scotland is a public-spirited and law-abiding country; it has its own legal system; and it has no neighbours apart from England, which would not contemplate war or even sanctions when faced with the alternative of divorce.

But where does this leave the rest of us who have thought of ourselves as British? The idea of Britain grew from a unique political history. But it gained credibility from economic and military success, and in particular from an Empire acquired, as Joseph Chamberlain put it, "in a fit of absentmindedness". The Scots, the Welsh and the Irish shared in this absentmindedness, which is but another name for Smith's "invisible hand". Yet without the British Empire, and without the Union, Britain will be a fiction — worse, a delusion. There will be no such place, and no such people as the British.

The English, being pragmatic, will quickly perceive that this is so. They will look around for the customs and institutions that have defined them, and which have made it so easy to live without a clear idea of who they are. But what will they find? A Parliament hastily and purposelessly reformed, so as to bear little relation to the "Queen in Parliament" of old: a monarchy irreversibly weakened by the destruction of the hereditary House of Lords; a common law qualified out of existence by European courts; an Anglican Church riven by self-doubt and with its liturgy in tatters; and — worst of all — a Government obedient to continental masters. They will find themselves in the very situation that they have fought for five centuries to avoid and for which the idea of Britain was devised as a shield.

It is hard to believe that the English will not react as other people in the modern world have reacted, by defining themselves as a nation. They will not like the Serbs, lay belligerent claim to their "historic" territories; they will not engage in pogroms or ethnic cleansing; they will not attempt the "splendid isolation" attributed to the Empire, at a time (1896) when splendour and isolation were just about compatible. They will, instead, set out in search of their civilisation — the continuous tradition of which gives them a claim to nationhood equal to that of the Scots and Serbs. And they will discover that they have forgotten it.

Vague ideas of the gentle-

man and his duties, of fair play and the stiffer upper lip may still inhabit the sports field; and here and there the English sense of humour and sang froid will be remembered. But most of what the new English will encounter, in school or through popular culture, will be remote from the civilisation of their ancestors. Whenever a chance arises to celebrate the past of their country or the virtues of its people, jeering will replace cheering. Schoolchildren will learn much about slavery, and the Englishmen involved in it, but nothing about its abolition by the English. They will be taught to see Old England as a place of "social exclusion" rather than of constant and collaborative reform.

The new English are being brought into a world without memory, in which nothing except sensual pleasure is represented as a good. The essence of English civilisation can be captured in a single word: "gentle". And those who love England still love it for its gentility and gentleness. From Voltaire to Copek, foreign admirers have seen England less as a political reality than as a moral ideal. The question is, how is that ideal to be defended?

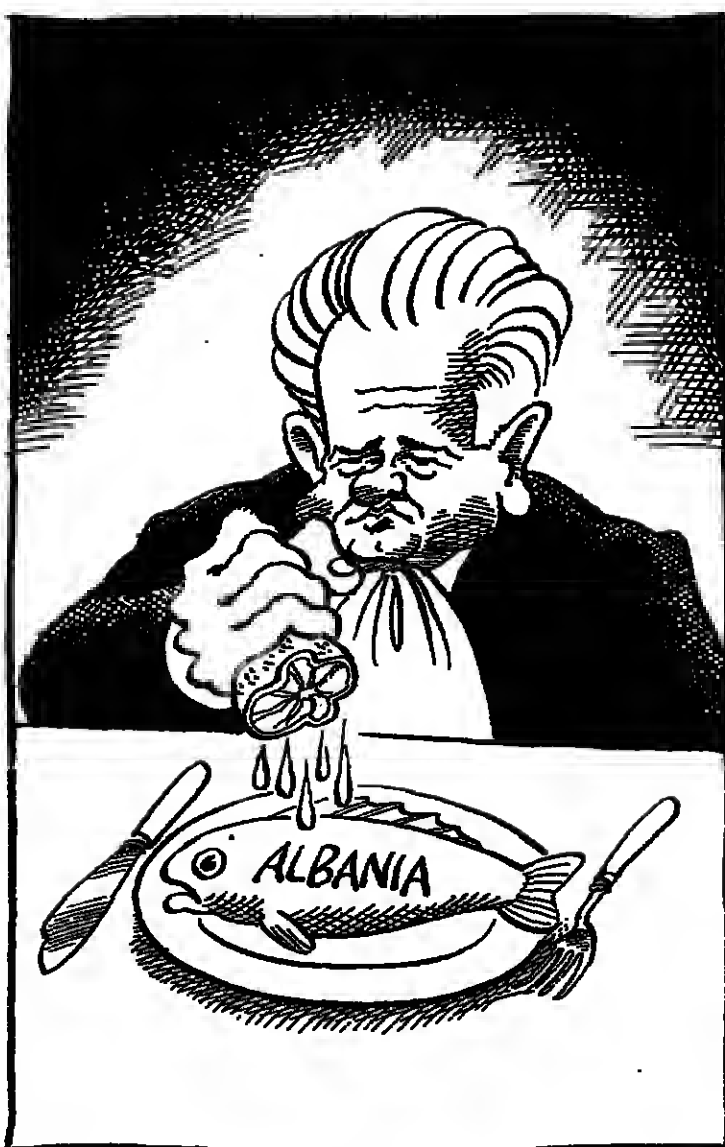
Schools and universities have made no stand against the more degenerate forms of

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popular culture, but instead have begun to "teach" it. Throughout the cultural establishment, from the BBC, from the Royal Academy to the Royal Fine Art Commission, we find growing acquiescence in our cultural decline. The Turner Prize is regularly awarded to the person who has most visibly desecrated the legacy of Turner; buildings which sneer at their civilised surroundings are put forward by the RIBA as triumphs of urban design and their architects rewarded with knighthoods. There is an eagerness to accept that our national culture is exemplified by Britpop, even at a time when the "Brit" is as meaningless as the pop.

One might be tempted to conclude from this that English civilisation was, after all, a fragile and ephemeral thing, with no ability to survive once the protecting shield of Britishness has been taken away. But I am not so pessimistic. We are living through a state of shock, and only when our political institutions have crumbled — which, thanks to new Labour, will be soon — will we be able to make the great choice which history demands of us. Then we will recognise that, after all, our country is something more than its institutions, and that the good things we have squandered were created by collective effort. Then we can begin again, as all the other people of Europe have had to begin again in our century, discovering what we are, not as a collection of first-person singulars, but as a first-person plural. The English will then emerge as a nation, as important to its members as is Scotland to the Scots.

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Suckers for punches

Bomb-happy Nato should realise
there is an alternative to world war

Am I completely wrong about Kosovo? Have I missed some vital point? Those who fight wars must banish doubt from their minds, since doubt is the enemy of courage. Those who criticise them enjoy no such security. If those who oppose Nato's bombing campaign in Yugoslavia are wrong, they are a menace to the war effort. Tony Blair yesterday said this was a war of "moral purpose". It is the apparent double-standard that enrages Serb opinion and gathers it, however reluctantly, behind Mr Milosevic.

Yet we are where we are. The gauntlet is down. Robin Cook talks of continuing with bombing "until the job is done". Anything less, he implies, would be nothing short of humiliation for Nato. Even Henry Kissinger, long an opponent of this intervention, is a convert to the argument. Now that American forces are engaged in combat, he tells the *Los Angeles Times*, "victory is the only exit strategy" (an ominous phrase from Kissinger of Vietnam). But by victory he means ground assault, as the critics of the "bombing alone" strategy have always claimed it would. And on this they are at odds with at least the public statements of Nato and the British Government.

What is now planned on Kosovo's border with Macedonia and Albania is a mystery wrapped in a horror. But a land assault on Kosovo has one virtue. It would close the gaping wound at the heart of Nato's present apoplexy. Mr Blair yesterday near frantic to tell the world that the ethnic "cleansing" of Kosovo had nothing to do with the Nato bombing. He said that Mr Milosevic planned it long ago and began it a week before the first bomb fell. Mr Milosevic, in other words, never intended only to crack down on the Kosovo Liberation Army but always meant to cleanse Kosovo of Albanians altogether. It is therefore a calumny against Nato to imply that the refugees are in any sense the result of the bombing.

The trouble with this explanation

licensed by the UN at the end of the civil war. Why has it so ferociously espoused the Kosovo Albanians? The question can be answered by appeals to expediency, but Mr Blair yesterday said this was a war of "moral purpose". It is the apparent double-standard that enrages Serb opinion and gathers it, however reluctantly, behind Mr Milosevic.

is that it implies an even greater calumny against Nato: that it was aware of the risk of humanitarian catastrophe and did nothing effective to stop it. It rejected as "too costly" the one military option capable of stopping it, the swift insertion of a rapid reaction force before the main Serb Army arrived, and resorted instead to the one option most likely to win Serb support for Mr Milosevic, bombing Belgrade. Mr Blair asks us to believe that his colleagues read intelligence warnings of what was about to happen, and then voted for "bombing alone". This was not "doing something about Milosevic" but the opposite. If true, it was pure Munich.

For what it is worth, I cannot believe that Mr Blair and his colleagues were so cynical. I prefer to see them as victims of their own naïve intervention in Yugoslavia's internal affairs and the consequent escalation of threats. Ministers who had never seen a gun fired in anger were mesmerised by military bombast about the political impact of "pinpoint accurate, laser-guided weapons systems", despite their failure to move President Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Nato would not respond to bombing threats by a pre-emptive strike into Kosovo, but last October. The gamble failed. The refusal to deploy ground troops when Kosovo was largely undefended now seems cowardly and negligent. Mr Milosevic was invited to call the bluff of the mightiest armies in the world and he did.

I repeat, the war party has not "done something about Milosevic". It has done nothing about him. The only honourable thing to do now is properly to go to war with him, yet British politicians still cannot stomach this logical outcome of their posture. Nato has been witness to, if

not party to, the displacement of almost a million Kosovans. Its response is not to restore them to their land but to destroy the oil and power, the roads, factories, bridges, trains and radio stations of a sizeable European state. Mr Milosevic may be "degraded" but he is politically impregnable, while the supposed beneficiary of this effort, Kosovo, is rendered a wasteland.

Having pulled Mr Milosevic on to the punch, the coherent policy would at least be to punch him properly — a policy to which gun-ho American opinion appears to be dragging the British Government. But such a policy must be mad. The most it could attain is some heavily fortified "safe havens" in Kosovo. It would drag into the fight every Slav nationalist, not least from Russia. It would also send a signal to any separatist movement that if it can provoke enough mayhem to "threaten a humanitarian disaster", bellicose Nato politicians will come rushing to its aid. A dozen such groups must be enviously watching the KLA's booming armoured at present. This is not "world policing" but anarchy.

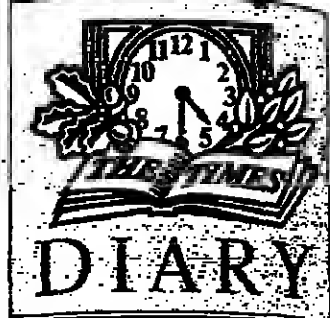
Nato had no business in halfheartedly sponsoring negotiations over Kosovo's autonomy. It was not invited to do so, and made a hash of it. It has no more business in Romania or Kurdistan or Azerbaijan or, for that matter, Basque Spain or Northern Ireland. Kosovo's autonomy remains where it was when Britain "recognised" the new, truncated Yugoslavia: at the mercy of Mr Milosevic. To invade its desolate valleys and try to hold them against Serb forces would be costly and pointless. To subject Serbia to an indefinite, purely punitive blitz would be obscene.

My answer to the question "what to do?" is therefore the same as it was last October. It is not to draw lines you have not the will to defend at proportionate cost. Non-intervention in foreign civil wars, coupled with generous aid to sufferers, has been normal British policy in the past. Most recently it has been policy in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sudan, Palestine, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. This is not a policy of cowardice or appeasement. Mr Milosevic is a nasty job of work but he is not Hitler or Stalin. He does not merit a third world war.



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Secrets of war

CLASSIFIED information about Sir Winston Churchill's plotting for D-Day is to be made public after a persistent campaign for its release by Rupert Allason, aka Nigel West. To mark the 55th anniversary of the invasion, the former Tory MP has persuaded the powers-that-be to allow him to publish the details of Operation Forlitude.

The deception plan succeeded in hoodwinking the Germans into believing that the Allies would land at the Pas de Calais rather than Normandy. Details were originally secreted by Roger Hesketh, the late Tory MP who, as a spook, had helped to devise the operation.

But the information has since found its way into the hands of Allason, who writes spy thrillers under his pseudonym and, until now, has had to keep his find private. "At last," an historian tells me, "we will find out just how big a role Churchill played."

AFTER announcing her split from Andre Agassi, Brooke Shields (below) is to arrange a spot of laser surgery. She needs to remove the nose of her husband jotted on her upper thigh during their courtship. With extraordinary presence, the American tennis player never reciprocated.



THE Blairite television presenter, David Aaronovitch, has been denounced by his mother for criticising Tony Benn's opposition to the war in the Balkans. Lavender Aaronovitch wrote to the veteran MP to tell him that she considers her son, the part-time *Newsnight* anchor, to be wrong and a fool.

"My mother said that she was going to write but I didn't believe her," Aaronovitch Jr says. "She always says she wishes I hadn't said something or another but still comes over to look after the kids."

A NASTY diary clash for Lord Williams of Mostyn was yesterday resolved by quick-thinking whips. The Home Office Minister was due at Windsor to be inducted by the Queen into the Privy Council, shortly before defending the age of consent Bill in the Lords. A friendly filibuster delayed the debate until my Lord arrived.

POLICE in Salisbury are to visit their colleagues in Notting Hill to pick up tips on how to handle the city's first Caribbean carnival next month (below). One question the Wiltshire bobbies should ask is how to escape looking ludicrous as they place their helmets on the heads of gyrating limbo dancers.



WRITING in the brochure to mark Nato's 50th anniversary, Tony Blair praises the alliance: "Even more important than tanks and guns was the steadfast political will of the people." Has Blair suffered a memory lapse? In the early Eighties, the PM belonged to the CND's parliamentary group which backed withdrawal from Nato.

WHY has William Hague asked Michael Portillo to join him on the hustings? The former Defence Secretary and a possible leadership contender has embarked on a national tour to drum up support for the Tories in next month's local government elections.

Hague has even gone so far as to provide Portillo with one of his bright young things from his own office to offer every assistance. "It is a possible precursor to making Portillo the party chairman," I am told, "but is also a good way of sharing the blame if the elections go horribly wrong."

EDWARD WELSH

'For the Royal Wedding, Mary has, after long deliberation, decided on a size 12 made for her by C&A, in a sort of turquoise'

You will, I know, have been as thrilled as I to learn that 2,000 "ordinary people" are to be invited to the wedding of Prince Edward and Miss Sophie Rhys-Jones, and you will thus be on tenterhooks, as public fascination with the preparations for the summer nuptials swells to its crescendo, to discover as much as possible about that lucky handful who will, any day now, find their trembling fingers plucking from their doormats the coveted passepasse requesting their presence at what is already being described by the more exorbitant tabloids as *The Wedding of June 19*.

Well, you have come to the right person: correctly recognising that, as an Ordinary Correspondent, I stand head and shoulders above nobody, the Palace has granted me exclusive access to its fat dossier on the

first couple to pass the rigorous selection process: and having spent the whole of last night nodding over this scrupulously mundane document, I can this morning reveal to a rapt public just a few of the details it is slaving to know.

John and Mary Robinson, 53 and 49 respectively, met 27 years ago at a Working garden centre. Neither of them was a keen gardener — he was looking for a small rubber plant to put on his television set, and she wanted three pansies of different colours to replace the three dead ones in her window-box — but standing next to one another at the till, they discovered a mutual interest in the new decimal currency, agreeing that both missed the old half-crown. From there, it was but a short step to the local Wimpey, where each had a quarter-pounder, without cheese, and a milky coffee. They married

two years later, and continued having sex on a weekly basis in their new joint flat, moving, in 1976, to an architect-designed semi-detached house on a Reigate executive estate, as soon as John qualified, in his opinion, as an executive. It was here that their two children, Peter John and Wendy Mary were born, soon to be joined by the half-collie, Spot, and Mrs Lockett, 51, who came in to do for them three days a week after Mrs Robinson returned to her career as a roofing secretary.

For the Royal Wedding, Mary has, after long deliberation, decided on a size 12 dress made for her by C&A, in a sort of turquoise, with black patent leather shoes, chosen for a reliable record in standing

Alan
Coren



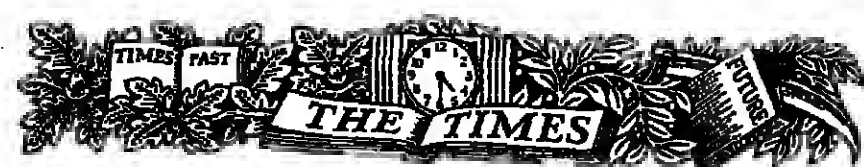
to his old hairpiece, because it has always stuck to him. That is John's favourite joke. For the ceremony itself, he has already set his Ferguson video-recorder with the long-term programmer Mary bought him for their recent silver wedding; they plan to watch the recording on June 20 with a Domino's pizza (extra large, no anchovy), although both have agreed not to wave at

cameras as the Royal Couple emerge on to the steps of St George's Chapel. Instead, John will raise his trilby as high as decorum permits. If this proves to be successful, a 10 by 8 print will be made from the tape by Snap-U-Like. Banstead, put in an antique-appearance frame, and stood on the mantelpiece between the couple's eight-day carriage clock and the bronzette plaque Wendy Mary received, in 1986, for good posture.

The Robinsons will be travelling from Reigate to Windsor for their beige M-registration Vauxhall Cavalier, entering the M25 at Junction 8 and leaving it at Junction 13, advice John received from the Automobile Association, of which he has been a member for almost a quarter of a century. Experts there have assured him that the journey should not take

more than 50 minutes, but he has decided, following complex discussions with informed neighbours, to err on the side of caution and allow an hour-and-a-half for traffic, parking, and dropping off Trish from Maison Geoff, who is coming to the Robinsons' home early that morning to rainproof Mary's highlights.

Assurances have naturally been sought by Buckingham Palace that the Robinsons will between now and June 19 do nothing out of the ordinary to draw attention to themselves, since this might well result in a withdrawal of the invitation, and the couple have, I understand, been quick to comply. However, informed sources tell me that, after an appropriate time has elapsed, John and Mary plan to commemorate the momentous day by double-glazing their entire ground floor.



CLEAR TARGETS

Why there can be no let-up in the bombing

Three weeks into an air war that many Western politicians hoped might be over in days, Nato has yet to make more than a small impact on the murderous Serb campaign in Kosovo. The Yugoslav Army is still bombarding villages, which Slobodan Milosevic's secret police and paramilitary forces can then empty and burn. Periodically, the Serbs reopen the borders to let through clumps of fugitives. Perhaps 600,000 more are trapped in Kosovo's mountains, probably without shelter, medicines or food. Air power cannot see or help them. But in the great Pannonian plain of the Yugoslav heartland, Nato airstrikes are having an increasingly devastating effect.

For nearly a decade, Mr Milosevic has flattened cities and entire communities in Croatia, Bosnia and now Kosovo; but this is the first time that the citizens of Belgrade, Novi Sad or Nis have had to endure the physical terrors of bombardment. Their suffering does not begin to be commensurate where Serb forces and police deliberately hunted down non-combatants. Nato has put the avoidance of civilian casualties ahead of military effectiveness. In a battle of will as well as skill, the military value of every target has been set against the risks of civil damage. Knowing this, the military leaders are dispersing equipment to farms, woods and towns and siting anti-aircraft batteries in residential areas. Mr Milosevic's special police are taking over schools. That, and the intensification of airstrikes, will raise the death toll. But tens of thousands more will lose their jobs as more factories are destroyed. The economic damage to Yugoslavia is already huge and will become crippling. Nato started bombing with only 200 aircraft and a narrowly defined range of targets; but General Wesley Clark could soon have 1,000 planes. If Mr Milosevic does not yield, he will literally, as well as politically, have ensured the destruction of his country.

Despite this grim prospect, there has so far been little argument in Nato about

what targets are legitimate. That is because before the campaign started, the military laid out its plans in detail, placing every target before the North Atlantic Council which then scrutinised and grouped them in terms of a graduated strategy. The agreed military concept was based on the recognition that the mobile columns and small paramilitary formations in Kosovo are hard to destroy from the air. The aim is therefore to cripple these forces by attacking the entire support system on which modern military operations rely.

The longer the campaign lasts, therefore, the grimmer will be its economic impact. Tanks cannot move without fuel; but nor can tractors, and Nato claims to have destroyed 70 per cent of Yugoslav petrol, oil and lubricant stocks. Factories turning out military trucks may also make cars; a bridge at Novi Sad carried fibre optic cables, but also commercial traffic; this week's attack on a railway bridge near Leskovac hit a passenger train. As our Defence Editor reports on page 5, Nato has damaged some 200 "target areas", some of them far from Kosovo. This remains an operation under close political control; hence the efforts to spare Montenegro, whose leaders have stood out against the subjugation of Kosovo. But inescapably, this tightening of the military screws will also pulverise the Yugoslav economy.

That is why Mr Milosevic expects Nato to waver. So long as he faces no personal danger, he may hold out whatever the cost to his countrymen; before the airstrikes began, he and his profiteering henchmen and relatives had already reduced the Yugoslav rump to lawless penury. Nato's campaign continues; but at some point it will have to weigh its options. At terrible cost, airstrikes will severely disrupt the Milosevic forces; but the sombre prospect remains that it may take ground troops, backed by massive air power, to drive them out of Kosovo. Preparations for that contingency are as urgent as ever.

ON PROBATION

Straw's tough choice looks more like a soft option

When a court sentences a criminal to probation, it should not be an easy option. Probation is not a rap on the knuckles but a manacled, albeit gentle, it has to be seen as one of a range of punishments which might follow conviction for a criminal offence. Prison may work, but not in every case. Instead, of incarceration, many offenders are sentenced to up to several hundred hours' work in the community and the intrusive supervision of their daily lives by a probation officer. But the feeling persists among many that the convict who walks out of the courtroom with just a probation order is practically a free man.

Last August Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, promised to toughen probation. A Home Office paper on co-operation between prisons and the Probation Service emphasised that punishment was a central part of the probation process. It set out plans for a National Corrections Policy Framework and a nationally run Probation Service. The paper even went so far as to suggest a new, more punitive name. It argued that justice should, however it is applied, be seen to be done. These radical proposals gave cause for hope.

A nationally run Probation Service has much to recommend it. This should enable clear standards to be set for probation services all over the country. Also, the reorganisation of local probation services into areas which correspond to police and Crown Prosecution Service boundaries should enable closer co-operation between all the law enforcement agencies.

Effective probation, however, is not easily secured by a central government department. Probation officers rely on their extensive local knowledge, gained from close contact with the criminals whom they supervise. Consequently, local probation

services need to be able to make decisions for themselves and to take action quickly. It is not yet clear whether a national Probation Service will mean a national bureaucracy and long delays as local initiatives are referred back to the Home Office for approval. Mr Straw should take care to ensure that this is not the case and that probation services retain the local autonomy which makes them work.

Mr Straw's stance on his other proposals appears to have softened. His retreat raises questions as to just how determined his reform of probation will be. In his speech to probation officers yesterday, there was no mention of renaming the service. Punishment was replaced by "Reduction of reoffending" and a National Corrections Policy was nowhere to be seen. The only indication that life might become harder for criminals on probation was in Mr Straw's suggestion that probation orders should be enforced in all cases.

Consistency would at least be a step in the right direction. Only a third of breaches of probation orders are acted upon at present. Enforcement is the key to any effective change. A new national Probation Service can set whatever standards it likes, but, unless these are actually acted upon, they will be worthless. It is not yet clear how Mr Straw's standards will be enforced. Meanwhile, the greatest hurdle to change has not yet been cleared: when will Mr Straw find the parliamentary time to push his planned legislation through? In the next parliamentary session he will be concentrating on overhauling the Race Relations Act after the Lawrence Inquiry. Probation is unlikely to make good election fodder for the year after. The Home Secretary, instead of taking a tough choice, may end up with a soft option.

A BREATH OF FRESH ARIA

Glyndebourne makes a sound move

For all its traditions of social propriety, of opulent picnic hampers and pre-Puccini Pimm's, Glyndebourne treasures a less established, more educative, intent. Although Mozart may have remained since the 1930s a mainstay of each season, the work of less familiar composers is often scheduled too. Directors are keen to dispel rumours that their productions are as easy on the palate as a glass of chilled Sancerre. And Glyndebourne's 1994 auditorium — the first British purpose-built opera house since John Christie incorporated the original theatre into his Elizabethan mansion fifty years before — improved the acoustics as well as the seating capacity. It should not simply serve, its directors insist, as a museum to classical pieces.

Of course, as divas warm up at wistaria twined casements, any cumbersome corporate types picnicking below may enjoy humming along to familiar arias as teaspoons of caviar slip deliciously down. But Glyndebourne's programme should amount to far more than the provision of a seasonal cultural perk for the fat cat whose company made a block booking.

Nicholas Snowman, the new general director of the opera house, puts a more challenging ethos to the test. He aims to bring a breath of fresh aria to the stage.

Celebrated old favourites will still be performed but, as we report on our arts pages today, Mr Snowman is on an ambitious mission to promote more esoteric works. He plans to revive Harrison Birtwistle's massive electronic opera *The Mask of Orpheus*, to commission the young British composer Thomas Adès, and to premiere *What Next?*, a complex new miniature opera by the American Elliott Carter. Even with the most commonly hummed composers, he will delve into the archives, reviving neglected works of Monteverdi with period instruments and embarking on a German Romantic project involving several 19th-century works previously considered unredemptable.

Mr Snowman takes exciting risks — not least at the box office. Often tastes are fine-tuned by familiarity. Palates are limited by lack of directorial daring. An introduction to a broader, more dissonant, cultural repertoire may chime with many imaginations. The intimacy of Glyndebourne lends itself to such individualistic enjoyment. As for any disappointed hummers out for a free supper in the sunset, they can pack an extra bottle of Pouilly Fumé in their picnic baskets and snooze comfortably through the performance — as indeed they have traditionally done.

Critics question Nato's campaign and its objectives

From Professor Sir Michael Howard

Sir, Professor Lawrence Freedman's article (April 9) about possible settlements for the Kosovo question raises some profoundly important issues for the conduct of the campaign.

Our ultimate objective, surely, is neither the resettlement of the refugees nor the punishment of Milosevic, but the creation of a stable settlement in the Balkans. This may best be done by the creation of a Nato protectorate over the whole of Kosovo, irrespective of the wishes of Serbia, or by some kind of agreed partition.

I am not an expert on the Balkans, but I can see the disadvantages of a condominium exercised by 19 or more Allies over a region that would still contain a resentful minority of Serbs, with an angry and revengeful homeland just beyond a long and indefensible border — a homeland made angrier and more revengeful with every bomb now being dropped. It seems a perfect recipe for a prolonged guerrilla war that would certainly keep Nato in business for the next century or so; but that is hardly the object of the exercise.

The alternative is a negotiated settlement that Serbia can live with, even if it does not satisfy the maximal demands of either side. The danger is that public opinion in the West is now becoming so heated that any compromise settlement will be condemned as surrender or, worse, "appeasement" and no Allied leader will dare to recommend it. But the longer the war goes on, the less likely it is that this option will remain open.

Sometimes making peace requires as much courage as waging war.

Yours etc,
MICHAEL HOWARD,
The Old Farm,
Eastbury, Hungerford RG17 7JN.
April 13.

From Mr Crispin Blunt, MP
for Reigate (Conservative)

Sir, Many with military experience are bewildered as to how today's military leaders have allowed Nato's political leaders to get themselves into such a mess over Kosovo. They, and I, do not understand how Nato's military leaders can have allowed the organisation to embark on a military strategy that has been nothing short of an outrageous gamble given the political objectives set for it.

Against the humanitarian objectives given by the Prime Minister at the outset, the strategy has already failed. The political objectives of containment have failed. The objective of

reinforcing regional stability is being met by crises in Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and Greece.

On the day the bombing started George Robertson told the House of Commons Defence Committee:

Our military objective — our clear, simple, military objective — will be to reduce the Serbs' capability to oppress the Albanian population and thus to avert a humanitarian disaster.

Who advised him that this could be achieved?

The Chief of Defence Staff, General Sir Charles Guthrie, has enthusiastically made the case for the current strategy in newspaper articles and at the daily press conferences. When I asked the Defence Secretary on March 31 in the House to name a single independent commentator who believed that Nato's military strategy would deliver its political objectives, he took refuge behind the advice of the Chief of Defence Staff.

There remains a disconnect between the military strategy and the new political objectives of restoring the situation in Kosovo in the wake of the humanitarian catastrophe precipitated once Milosevic decided to take Nato on. The use of air power alone continues to be an irresponsible gamble as far as these new objectives are concerned. There is no clarity about how the military means will so far achieve the aim. Instead there is a classic case of mission creep, for example with the introduction of Apache helicopters and Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (report, April 12).

If Nato articulated a military strategy that, however long it took, would deliver its political objectives, the view from Belgrade would be very different. There is no sign of this happening.

It is my judgment that it is unreasonable to expect the Armed Forces to continue to have confidence in the military advice being given to ministers by their chief military adviser. I have very reluctantly come to the conclusion that this should be said publicly. We need a new strategy and a new chief to articulate it.

Yours faithfully,
CRISPIN BLUNT,
House of Commons.
April 13.

From Sir Nicholas Pearson

Sir, In the matter of Serbia our Prime Minister is said to be motivated by the wholly Christian sense that, faced by such suffering, we must do something. It appears that after some days of harrowing images on the television,

public opinion is moving behind him. I suspect not for long.

May the unpalatable truth be that there is little we can effectively do without making the whole area even more unstable? Did the Americans learn nothing from their bombing of Cambodia and destabilisation and ruin that followed the destruction of infrastructure?

There is a chilling zeal and certainty about the Prime Minister's fervour that stands at odds with the complex realities of an ancient tribal situation that, in itself, is simply not our business. Our leader's emotional calls to stop the violence are of course understandable but not by the paradoxical and wholly ineffective method of bombing.

We should immediately cease the bombing. We should seal off the area with strong Nato forces on the key borders in order to help the regional governments to maintain order and stability. We should provide massive humanitarian help where we are able. By this action Nato will have achieved order and been seen to achieve order.

We should then, for the moment, leave the region to sort out its own mess. When the parties choose to decide that economics are more important than killing each other, then we should help them all we are able.

Let us act with firmness and imagination and we may yet contain the contents of Pandora's box before it is too late.

Sincerely,
NICHOLAS PEARSON,
9 Upper Addison Gardens, W14 8AL.
April 13.

From Mr M. H. Stevenson

Sir, The Nato official who banged on about the unfortunate loss of life in the attack on the Serbian rail bridge (report, April 13) should have responded to the question "Were there any civilian casualties?" by saying "Yes. Next question".

There are many who seem to think it is possible to wage a war without incurring any loss of human life. History shows this to be a futile objective. It would be a far greater tragedy if Nato allowed its resolve to be weakened by this event and demonstrated that Mr Milosevic is, indeed, as invulnerable as his followers would have us believe.

Yours etc,
M. H. STEVENSON,
92 Imber Road, Winchester,
Hampshire SO23 0NH.
steven@uk.ibm.com
April 13.

Power of non-elected judiciary to change the law

From Mr Francis Bennion and
Mr Gerald Howarth, MP
for Aldershot (Conservative)

Sir, We write in support of Mr J. B. McGuinness (letter, April 8), who stated that the law lords had stepped over the mark in their decision regarding so-called institutionalised discrimination against women. Unfortunately such judicial expansionism is only too common today.

The former Home Office Minister, Lord Patten, recently pointed out (article, March 16) that over the years "judges have taken more and more powers to themselves", and that this, when linked to the new constitutional role that legislation is giving them, radically alters the balance of power in the State. It upsets that separation of powers between legislature and judiciary which is one of the proud boasts of our constitution.

In another recent article (*New Law Journal*, March 19) one of the undersigned, Francis Bennion, criticised the decision of the law lords in the Kleinwort Benson case. Here, by three to two, they purported to overturn, as if by parliamentary legislation, the longstanding rule of the common law that payments made under a mistake of law are irrecoverable. One of the majority, Lord Goff of Chieveley, blantly described what they were doing as the "abrogation" of this rule. Abrogation equals repeal, and our judges do not possess the repealing power. It seems that some of them are seeking to assume it.

The latter article also criticised another recent decision where the law lords (again by three to two) purported to change the longstanding common law rule that highways are only to be used for passing and repassing, and matters incidental to that. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, decided this was too constricted for modern conditions. You reported him (Law Report, March 5) as saying:

To limit lawful use of the highway to that which was literally "incidental or ancillary" to the right of passage would be to place an unrealistic and unwarranted restriction on commonplace day-to-day activities. The public highway was a public place that the public might enjoy for any reasonable purpose.

The OED (second edition, 1994) defines "warranted" as "allowed by law or authority; approved; justified; sanctioned". The Lord Chancellor is saying that the well-established existing rule about highways is "unwarranted" when in fact it is just the opposite.

These matters go to the heart of how we are governed as a nation, and affect everyone. In particular they affect the business community, who look to certainty in the law. The growing propensity of judges to change the law whenever they see fit is dangerous to our commercial prosperity, as well as to our freedom.

Changes in the law should be made by Parliament after full public consultation and debate. They should not be made by judges, who are appointed not elected and lack the means to con-

sult those affected and to acquire the necessary background information.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS BENNION,
GERALD HOWARTH,
c/o 5 Old Nursery View,
Kennington, Oxford OX1 5NT.
April 10.

From Sir Christopher Staughton

Sir, Naturally enough I share the concern of Mr McGuinness at a recent decision of the law lords, since it overruled a decision of my own.

The right of refugees to asylum granted by the Geneva Convention is, it would seem, to be greatly extended. But the remedy which he proposes must be scrutinised with great care, lest it turn out to be worse than the disease.

That the selection process for the judiciary should become "more open and accountable" is fine. Are we then to have judges elected by popular vote, and dismissed in the same way? In at least one country where that happens there are cases — no doubt rare — of quite improper pressure being deliberately imposed on judges, by politicians for populist reasons.

We must tread warily in changing the method of appointing judges — for fear of something worse.

Yours truly,
CHRISTOPHER STAUGHTON,
20 Essex Street, WC2R 3AL.
April 9.

Cost of music lessons

From Mr David Andrews

Sir, I moved from being a comprehensive school head of music to an independent boarding school 22 years ago, partly because I saw where the local education authority music provision was leading (letter, April 5).

At the time I was criticised for furthering musical elitism. Who is encouraging elitism now?

State school parents pay up to 50 per cent more for the same lessons as provided by the all-graduate staff at my own school.

The children in our new prep school will be able to start musical instruments on a one-to-one basis at below the state cost, and this is just the age to encourage learning — strings especially.

Many local authorities pay little more than lip service to their peripatetic music service. The more honest ones actually admit it.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ANDREWS,
Harrogate Ladies' College,
Clarence Drive,
Harrogate HG1 2QG.
music@hlc.org.uk
April 5.

John Diamond's battle with cancer

From Mrs Verena Pentlow

Sir, John Diamond (book extracts, March 29 and 30; columns April 3 and 10) may fight shy of adjectives such as brave and courageous in his battle with cancer, but there can be few readers left unmoved by his humble and humorous approach.

As children, my two siblings and I lived, with our mother, through my father's long and brave battle with cancer. However, there was no communication about his illness, either between him and his doctors or with us as a family, and the effects are still with us today to the extent that I find this letter difficult to write.

Carry on John, enjoying your family and puppy, with openness, honesty and laughter. May you enjoy many more precious moments.

Yours faithfully,
VERENA PENTLOW,
11 Wells Road,
Riseley, Bedford MK44 1DY.
April 10.

From Dr Justin Stebbing

Sir, From across the Atlantic my colleagues and I read John Diamond with deep affection and are reminded of a quote from the American author Theodore H. White (*The Book of Beasts*, Dover Publications, 1984):

The best thing for being sad... is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies, you may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins, you may miss your only love, you may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one way for it then — to learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it.

This is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting.

From you, John Diamond, we are as ever humbled and learn so much. Thank you always.

Sincerely,
JUSTIN STEBBING,
Department of Medicine,
The Johns Hopkins Hospital,
Baltimore, Maryland 21205.
jsteb@wechlink.welch.jhu.edu
April 10.

Joy of birdwatching

From the Reverend Ian Stratton

Sir, When Burma became independent on January 4, 1948, British Forces personnel sailed from Rangoon in the *SS Empire Trooper*. The servicemen on board received a surprise when the voice of the Officer Commanding Troops came over the Tannoy system, not with the expected disciplinary notices but describing the gulls following the ship and enthusing about one among them, a vagrant of a species normally found in northern waters.

One of those servicemen later became a birdwatcher himself, but until reading your obituary notice of Lieutenant-Colonel C. L. Boyle (April 2) he never knew the name of the enthusiast who had first shown him the joy the hobby can give, and the influence that sharing the joy can have.

Yours faithfully,
IAN STRATTON,
20 Bradley Road,
Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 8BP.
April 8.

Scottish victory

From Mr Alasdair Hunter

Sir, After the shenanigans before the start of the Five Nations Championship over England's participation, how correct has the decision to reinstate them been seen to be.

My fellow Scots (and probably not a few Welsh or Irish) would, I'm sure, agree that winning a tournament that did not include England would be a hollow victory indeed.

Yours faithfully,
ALASDAIR HUNTER,
Chequers Lodge, Chequers Close,
Grimston, King's Lynn PE32 1AT.
April 11.

EU patron saint

From Mr James Macdonald

Sir, The European Union may have its flag, but it lacks a patron saint.

With the European Central Bank's inflexible control in mind, I propose the tyrant Procrustes. His chop or stretch methods of harmonisation make him the ideal candidate.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES MACDONALD,
58 Clifford Avenue,
Taunton, Somerset TA2 6DL.
April 12.

Otherwise engaged

From Mr P. D. Doherty

Sir, What freak of circumstance renders the inapparently named customer care service lines of service providers permanently engaged, or otherwise unobtainable, while their sales/marketing lines are always open and readily accessible?

Yours faithfully,
P. D. DOHERTY,
5 Tancard Road,
Luton, Bedfordshire LU2 7XA.
April 13.

Civil legal aid

From the Director of Victim Support

Sir, The Access to Justice Bill returns to the House of Commons on Wednesday, April 14. Yet some of its provisions seem to conflict with the Protection from Harassment Act — a previous piece of Labour government legislation.

The Act provides special protection for victims of racial harassment, stalking and domestic violence, often by way of an injunction gained through the civil courts. However, the new legislation prioritises civil legal aid only to victims of direct violence. Victims of harassment — a problem which has only recently been recognised — are left unprotected.

We hope the Government will look at this again during the time that the Bill remains in the Commons in order to ensure that civil legal aid is equally available for all victims requiring protection from harassment.

Yours faithfully,
HELEN REEVES,
Director,
Victim Support,
Cranmer House,
39 Brickton Road, SW9 6DZ.
April 12.

Last in the field

From the Deputy Bailiff of Jersey

Sir, In your report on the Scottish elections (April 9) you described Culloden as "the last real [my italics] battle fought on British soil".

Last year I approached (with some trepidation) an enormous Scots guard at Culloden and spoke with some indignation, as a native Jerseyman, of the Battle of Jersey, January 1781. He fixed me with a withering look: "This was the last pitched battle on British soil."

"Real?" "Pitched?" What then was the Battle of Jersey, immortalised by Copley's great painting in the Tate Gallery?

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS HAMON,
The Bailiff's Chambers,
Royal Court House, Jersey JE1 1DD.
April 9.

Business letters, page 27

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

NEWS

More troops bound for Macedonia

■ Britain is sending another 2,000 troops, with tanks and artillery, to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to be part of an international force for eventual deployment in Kosovo. Announcing the armoured battle group reinforcement in the Commons, Tony Blair said the extra troops were not being sent to invade Kosovo but to be ready to implement a peace settlement. Reports, pages 1, 4-8

Prisoner releases could be stopped

■ The Government may be forced to consider halting prisoner releases if the Northern Ireland peace process has to be suspended. That would jeopardise the release of such figures as the Brighton bomber Patrick Magee and increase the likelihood of the Good Friday accord unravelling during a summer of contentious parades and European elections. Page 1

Bank boss lasts a day

Mike O'Neill, a 52-year-old American banker and former US Marine taken on to revive the ailing fortunes of Barclays Bank, lasted just one day on the job before succumbing to ill health. Pages 1, 3

Snow mars cricket

Snow stopped play on the opening day of the county cricket season. Last year the opening fixtures of the cricket season saw scarcely any action, but it didn't snow until day two. Page 1

Railtrack condemned

Britain's railways are in a worse condition than they were under British Rail, according to a critical Government report on Railtrack's first four years. Page 2

Tory confusion

William Hague shunned the national spotlight to launch his party's local election campaign at a school in true blue Tunbridge Wells in Kent — sparking confusion at Westminster over the Tories' declared aim of using the campaign to boost the party leader's public profile. Page 2

Airbag warning urged

An airbag may have caused a woman's death in a head-on crash, an inquest was told. Jennifer Reichardt was said to have suffered a rare skull fracture when the inflating bag knocked her backwards into her seat's headrest. Page 3

Dressmaker stitches up royal deal

■ In the front room of a tiny ground floor flat, the wedding dress of royal bride Sophie Rhys-Jones is being designed by a young designer who caters for an elite circle of Chelsea socialites. Samantha Shaw, however, is about to be catapulted on to the world stage after her position as maker of The Royal Dress was confirmed yesterday. Page 9

Blair's vision for NHS

Tony Blair has unveiled his vision of a revamped NHS, which would see doctors' surgeries open like high street shops and allow patients to drop in without an appointment, and medical advice for doctors and patients to be posted on the Internet. Page 9

Woodhead battle

The former wife of Chris Woodhead emerged from the shadows of a left-wing campaign to destabilise him — to challenge the Prime Minister to dismiss him as Chief Inspector of Schools. Page 11

Kvaerner jobs threat

The Government was holding crisis talks to find new buyers for a Scottish shipyard and other operations after Kvaerner announced a shake-up threatening 5,000 British jobs. Page 12

Movie beers banned

Move-makers are threatening to ban all blockbuster screenings at the Metro cinema in Penistone, near Barnsley, unless the operators stop the introduction of intervals for beers at the bar. Page 13

Tunnel flames fanned

A decision by Italian officials to open a ventilation shaft when a fire broke out last month in the Mont Blanc tunnel linking France and Italy may have fanned the inferno, in which at least 41 people died, a preliminary report said. Page 14



Kvaerner is to sell its British engineering interests, including the Govan shipyard in Glasgow, putting thousands of jobs at risk. Page 12

Supermarket sweep

Tesco revealed trading data for last year which reveals that it is streaking away from Sainsbury's. But Tesco's opening hours have been criticised by the Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern. Page 23

Net head: A 35-year-old accountant

has been made head of Freeserve, the Internet arm of Dixons, the electrical retailer. John Pluthero will become chief executive of a business which Dixons is looking at making a separate company. Page 23

Markets: The FTSE 100 index

broke new ground, finishing at a record 6513, up 71 points on the day. The pound finished marginally up against the dollar on \$1.6167, while the euro slid about a third of penny to 66.75p. Pages 23, 26

Football: Emmanuel Petit

has pledged his immediate future to Arsenal after earlier reports that he would quit England. Page 44

Cricket: Snow greeted the arrival

of the domestic cricket season, with Durham's Riverside ground blanketed as play was abandoned without a ball bowled. Page 44

Midweek view: Simon Barnes

provokes debate with the argument that sport can be harmful to your health, both in the physical and mental sense. Page 42

Athletics: David Powell continues

his countdown to the London Marathon on Sunday. Page 38

Tennis: Britons Tim Henman and

Greg Rusedski have confirmed their entries for the Stella Artois Championships in June. Page 42

Tomorrow

IN THE TIMES

FILMS

Rupert Everett, left, plays Lord Goring in Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*.

BOOKS

Is Michael Eisner of Disney the most important Hollywood mogul since Jack Warner sold his studio?

PETER RIDDELL

The ends are broadly agreed, but the means remain cloudy. Backing at Westminster for the Nato military action in Kosovo has increased since before Easter. Page 8

SIMON JENKINS

Having pulled Mr Milosevic on to the punch, the coherent policy would at least be to punch him properly — a policy to which gun-ho American opinion appears to be dragging Britain. But such a policy must be made. Page 18

ROGER SCRUTON

The English will, instead, set out in search of their civilisation — the continuous tradition of which gives them a claim to nationhood equal to that of the Scots and Serbs. And they will discover that they have forgotten it. Page 18

ALAN COREN

The Palace has granted me exclusive access to their fat dossier on the first couple to pass the rigorous selection process. Page 18

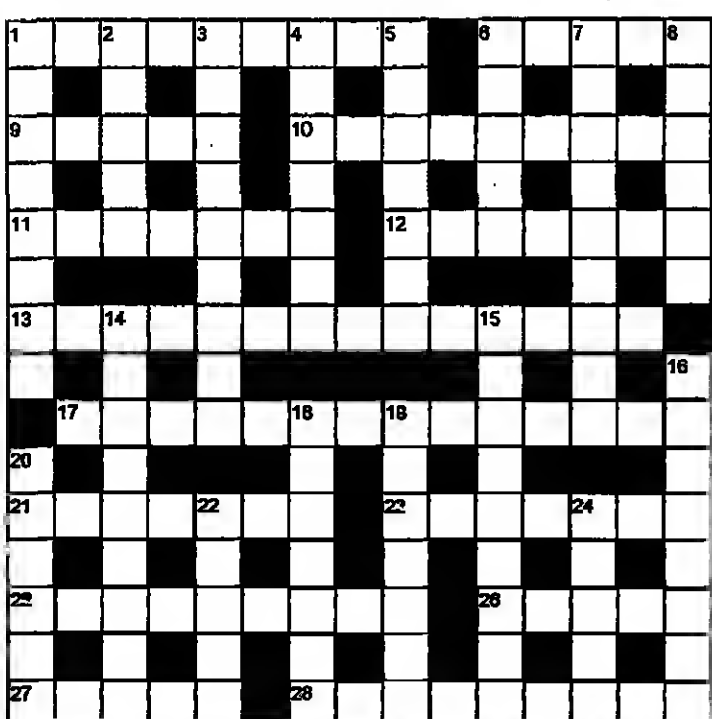
Lord Stott, Senator of the College

of Justice in Scotland 1967-84; Squadron Leader H. B. "Mick" Bell-Syer, fighter pilot; Boxcar Willie, country music singer; Professor Frank Lees, engineer. Page 21

Criticism of the Nato campaign:

John Diamond's battle with cancer; power of the judiciary; civil legal aid; last British battle: cost of music lessons; birdwatching. Page 19

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 21,077



ACROSS

- 1 Joined prisoner at end of sentence outside prison (9).
- 2 The Black Watch? (5).
- 3 Jazz show shown by broadcaster half-heartedly (5).
- 4 Noticing bishop in old boots, say (9).
- 5 Former partner's generous, for instance (7).
- 6 Tragic prisoner in song bound to be rejected (7).
- 7 Devastation of land enabled everyone to see ultimate issue (2,3,3,3).
- 8 Busy doctor helped with his cases (8,6).
- 9 Shake sauce to go on unopened bun (7).
- 10 Fellow sent back by boss in plant (7).
- 11 Some junk — the amount found in sewer? (9).

Solution to Puzzle No 21,076

REQUIREMENT ACQUA
BLANKET COVERAGE
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FAIRWAY SANGRIA
F T A I U B
GAVIATION PETAL
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CAPRICE LEANDER
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TRYING ORANGIERIE

DOWN

- 1 Like fine construction, easily damaged by falling under horse and trap (8).
- 2 Point to one area that was formerly part of Africa (5).
- 3 Distilled university, new one, in London area (9).
- 4 I must be held up in a vessel as far away as possible (7).
- 5 Catch, dashed upset, seen wriggling about (7).
- 6 Composer's sentence: court quashed (5).
- 7 Foreign money invested in glamorous and ambitious contract (5,4).
- 8 Husband subsequently admitted making fuss (6).
- 9 A push name involved with the top club (9).
- 10 Feeling upset, left old colony, predicting ruin (4,5).
- 11 European schoolboys finally moved (8).
- 12 Accomplished FBI agent scoffed too much (7).
- 13 People initially going to suffer under minor potentate (7).
- 14 Ask bridge player about one opponent in game of cards (6).
- 15 Drawing instrument found among dividers? (5).
- 16 Language from officer disheartened one (5).

Times Two Crossword, page 44

AA INFORMATION

Latest Road and Weather conditions
UK Weather: All regions 0330 444 910
UK Roads: All regions 0330 401 410
Inside M25 0330 401 746
M25 and Link Roads 0330 401 747
National Motorways 0330 401 748
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Channel crossings 0330 401 910
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Wales 410 332 Northern Scotland 610 342
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HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 6:08 am Sun sets: 7:54 pm
Moon rises: 6:39 pm Moon sets: 5:46 am
New moon April 18
London 7:54 pm to 6:06 am
Edinburgh 8:04 pm to 6:16 am
Belfast 8:16 pm to 6:28 am
Manchester 8:07 pm to 6:10 am
Perthshire 8:14 pm to 6:30 am

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up
46.03% of the raw material
for UK newspapers in 1997

FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

Use this book for your school library.
The new book is called: *Free Books for Schools*
It lists over 100 free books for schools.
Each book costs £1.00. A book is available
each week from Friday, April 16.

THE TIMES

FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

WALKERS

FREE BOOKS FOR SCHOOLS

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WALKERS

FORECAST

General: England and Wales will have a few sunny spells but there will be prolonged heavy showers, most frequent this afternoon, many of them of hail, sleet and possibly snow. The best chance of drier and brighter weather will be on southwestern coasts. Gales in northwest Scotland, with frequent heavy showers, will make it feel especially cold. The rest of Scotland will also be windy with showers or longer spells of rain and some snow on the mountains. Sheltered southern areas will, however, see some sunny spells.

Tonight: evening showers will quickly

die out across much of England and Wales to leave another cold night with long, clear spells. Sheltered parts of Scotland will also have some clear skies, and temperatures will drop below freezing before further wintry showers spread southwards into east and northeast England by morning.

London, SE England, E Anglia, Central

S England: starting cold but generally dry and bright before about 10.00, bringing heavy and thundery showers, many of them of hail, sleet or perhaps snow. A moderate west to northwest wind. Max temp 8C (46F).

Midlands, N Wales, NW England,

like District, Isle of Man: cold with heavy showers, some thundery with hail, sleet or snow mixed in. A freshening northwest wind. Max 8C (46F).

E England, Central N, NE England:

morning sunshine will be replaced by prolonged showers, some of them wintry. A fresh west to northwesterly wind. Max 8C (46F).

Channel Islands, SW England, S

Wales: sunny spells but also a few showers, the cold one heavy and wintry. A freshening northwest wind. Max 8C (46F).

Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aber-

deen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: sunny breaks but some showers and longer periods of rain likely with snow on the hills. A fresh north to north-west wind. Max 8C (46F).

SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central High-

lands, Argyll, NW Scotland: cold, and windy with sunny spells and heavy, wintry showers. A strong northwest wind; gales in north. Max 7C (45F).

Northern Ireland: early sunny spells

but turning showery with many of the showers heavy and wintry. A freshening northwest wind. Max 8C (46F).

Republic of Ireland: dry and bright

then showers, heavy at times. Wind north-west light, fresh later. Max 9C (48F).

Outlook: tomorrow and Friday will

remain cold and unsettled with only limited sunny spells and further sharp showers for most places, the showers falling as sleet or snow over the hills. The wind should, however, gradually ease.

24 hrs to 5 pm, b=brilliant, c=cloud, d=drizzle, ds=dust storm, duf=dust, f=fog, lg=log, g=gales, h=heat

r=rain, sh=showers, s=sleet, s=sun, t=thunder

Temperatures at midday local time on Monday. X = not available

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TODAY

Changes to the chart below from noon: lows H and L will drift slowly north; high K will remain slow-moving in mid-Atlantic

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RJB's future is secured by £1.3bn Nat Power deal

By Christine Buckley, Industrial Correspondent

THE future of RJB Mining, Britain's biggest coal producer, was secured yesterday when it won a £1.3 billion contract from National Power.

However, much of the agreement to buy up to 28 million tonnes of coal from RJB hinges on options for the huge Drax power station, which is being sold.

The new owners of Drax, which burns 10 million tonnes of coal a year and supplies 10 per cent of England and Wales's power, could choose to buy supplies from overseas. It is thought that up to 14 million tonnes of the deal are only optional contracts.

The four-year deal comes on top of an 18-million tonne, three-year agreement signed last year between National Power and RJB - taking the full contract to five years.

The price is thought to be 120p a gigajoule, in line with previous contracts with Power-

Gen and Eastern and about 20 per cent lower than prices commanded last year by RJB under old contracts.

If National Power and the new Drax owners take all 46 million tonnes, RJB will be left with overcapacity of one to two million tonnes. However, with the closure of two mines owned by an independent mining company and the possibility of increasing sales to industrial markets, RJB could reasonably expect to find extra sales in the short term.

Richard Budge, chief executive of RJB, said that all collieries had now been saved from the threat of closure on market grounds, although geological factors were not so certain. He said the deal would "enable us to plan our mining operations in the most cost-effective way for some years to come".

There have been claims that because the market, rather than policy, dictates Britain's



Mervyn Lowther, chief cashier of the Bank of England, yesterday signing the global bill representing £300 million (£202 million) when the Bank held its first auction of euro bills

Cruickshank extends review

DON CRUICKSHANK, the man hired by the Government to investigate the competitiveness of Britain's retail banks, said yesterday that he had extended his review to take in electronic commerce and money transmission (Caroline Merrell writes).

Mr Cruickshank, who launched his review at the beginning of the year, said that he had received more than 100 responses - and 70 complaints from members of the public against banks and finance houses.

The review is looking at the competitiveness of the banks' lending to small businesses, current accounts and credit cards. Mr Cruickshank is expected to report his findings by the end of the year.

Yesterday at a briefing on the review's progress, Mr Cruickshank said: "The responses to the consultation document have been thoughtful and constructive."

Mr Cruickshank also denied categorically that Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, had ever considered imposing any kind of windfall tax on bank profits.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

US brokers report record first quarter

WALL STREET'S recovery from last year's global market turmoil was underlined yesterday when Merrill Lynch, the biggest US broker, and Paine Webber, another top-five securities house, reported record first-quarter profits. The strong performance lifted the shares of both companies in early trading and also boosted Internet brokers, such as Charles Schwab.

Merrill Lynch, which owns Mercury Asset Management, the UK-based fund manager, said that net earnings were \$609 million (£375 million), up 18 per cent on the same period in 1998. The results were buoyed by rising commissions and trading profits. The earnings per share figure of \$1.44 topped analysts' forecasts, which had hovered about \$1.23. Net revenues were up 11 per cent to \$5.3 billion. Staff costs increased by the same factor. Merrill said that Mercury had "continued to build momentum", with new institutional business at record levels in the period. Paine Webber profits rose 33 per cent to \$160.6 million in the first three months of the year, again well ahead of forecasts. Revenues were \$1.3 billion, up 18 per cent.

Tie Rack in the red

TIE RACK, the troubled British neckwear retailer that recently sold out for £22.6 million to one of its suppliers, the Italian textile firm Frangit, said yesterday that trading in the first ten weeks of its new financial year remained challenging. The group, which operates from 420 outlets, also revealed that losses before tax and exceptional items were £7.4 million for the year to January 31, 1999, having made a profit of £5.1 million last time. Turnover in the year fell 13 per cent to £90 million.

House price gap

THE gap between house prices in London and the rest of the South East is now wider than it was at any time in the 1980s housing boom, according to the Nationwide Building Society's latest quarterly review. It indicates that house prices in London are now 20 per cent higher than the South East and nearly two and half times, on average, higher than the North. The society has lifted its forecast for house price inflation this year from 2.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent because of an improvement in consumer confidence after recent cuts in base rates.

PacifiCorp go-ahead

SCOTTISH POWER yesterday cleared UK regulatory hurdles in its £4.7 billion attempt to takeover PacifiCorp. But the company still faces a series of regulatory challenges in the US. Kim Howells, Competition and Consumer Affairs Minister, said he would allow the merger, which in effect is a takeover, following the advice of the Office of Fair Trading and the energy regulator. If the takeover is completed, Scottish Power has said it will restructure the holding company to divide generation and non-electricity businesses from the others.

Japanese venture for 3i

THE venture capitalist 3i is on the search for management buy-out potential in Japan, with the announcement of a joint venture with Industrial Bank of Japan. The two are launching a ¥20 billion (£100 million) initial fund in which the equity split will be 60-40 in 3i's favour. Brian Larcombe, chief executive of 3i, said: "We see many parallels with the development of our market in Germany. There is a need for large companies to restructure and concentrate on core activities and for independent companies to solve their own succession problems."

EXCHANGE RATES			
Bank Buys		Bank Sells	
Australia \$	2.63	Japan Yen	206.18
Austria Sch	21.57	Malta	0.675
Belgium Fr	65.51	Netherlands Gld	3.466
Canada \$	2.524	New Zealand \$	3.12
Cyprus Cyp £	0.5088	Norway Kr	45.12
Denmark Kr	11.10	Portugal Esc	200.26
Egypt	5.72	S Africa R	10.57
Finland Mk	5.44	Spain Ptas	200.27
France Fr	10.28	Sweden Kr	14.18
Germany DM	3.087	Switzerland Fr	2.552
Greece Dr	511	Turkey Lira	63.999
Hong Kong \$	10.34	USA \$	1.721
Iceland	130		1.578
Indonesia	17734		
Ireland P	1.2220		
Israel Sh	6.85		
Italy Lira	3071		

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

COMPETITION THE TIMES

WIN A COTTAGE IN CORNWALL

Today The Times, in association with the Virgin One account, offers readers the chance to win a lovely cottage in the typical Cornish village of Perranwell Station. Smithy Cottage, with its two bedrooms and pretty garden, is the ideal holiday home. Close to Truro and an 18-hole golf course, our prize cottage will provide the lucky winner with the perfect place from which to watch the eclipse of the sun on August 11.

HOW TO ENTER Collect 12 Times tokens and two tokens from The Sunday Times and attach them to an entry form which appeared for the last time yesterday. Tokens will appear up to April 18 and a bonus token will be published on Friday. The winner will be chosen at random from all entries received by Friday, April 30, 1999. Normal Times Newspapers prize draw rules apply.

08456 000 001

CHANGING TIMES

National Provident Institution Notice of Extraordinary General Meeting

NOTICE is hereby given that an Extraordinary General Meeting of National Provident Institution ("NPI") will be held at The Wembley Conference Centre, Empire Way, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 0DW, on Wednesday 19th May 1999 at 11.00 a.m. to consider and, if thought fit, to pass a resolution, which will be proposed as a Special Resolution, with effect as follows:

(a) approving, and authorising and instructing the carrying into effect by the Directors of NPI of, the proposals described in a circular to members and policyholders of NPI dated 6th April 1999, including, without limitation, a scheme providing for the transfer to National Provident Life Limited, a subsidiary of AMP (UK) PLC, of NPI's long term business pursuant to Section 49 of, and Part I of Schedule 2C to, the Insurance Companies Act 1982 (the "Scheme") and granting the Directors of NPI power to agree to or make such additions, deletions or amendments to such proposals, and to do all such things on behalf of NPI, as they consider necessary or desirable to carry such proposals into effect;

(b) subject to the Scheme being sanctioned by an Order of the High Court of Justice, amending the Rules of NPI so:

(i) give power to effect the Scheme;

(ii) confer membership of NPI on legal or contractual assignees and transferees (or in the case of joint assignees or transferees, the unanimously nominated or, failing such nomination, first named living assignee or transferee), including an assignee in trust but not an assignee or trustee in bankruptcy, receiver or administrative receiver, who by the Effective Date (as defined in the Scheme) has acquired the absolute right to an insurance policy written by NPI, subject to such assignee or transferee complying with the laws of NPI from time to time, such membership to be effective from the date of assignment or transfer and to replace the membership of the assignor or transferor in respect of that insurance with effect from such date;

(iii) confer membership of NPI on any assignee or trustee in bankruptcy, receiver or administrative receiver in place of the former member if so agreed between him and NPI and he complies with the laws of NPI from time to time; and

(iv) authorise the Directors of NPI to resolve conclusively any doubts as to whether or not any person is a member of NPI and for this purpose to rely upon NPI's records and, subject to any conclusive evidence to the contrary, to assume that any assignee or transferee of a policy shown in NPI's computer records has acquired the absolute right to such policy; and

(c) subject to the Scheme taking effect, adopting new Rules of NPI pursuant to which existing membership rights of NPI's members will be extinguished and National Provident Life Limited will become the sole member of NPI, and a number of consequential changes will be made.

Principal Office:
55 Calverley Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN1 2UE

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
Steven O'Brien
Secretary
12th April 1999

- NOTES:
- The above is an explanation of the effect of the proposed Special Resolution given in accordance with Rule 16(3) of the Rules of NPI. The actual Special Resolution which is to be considered can be inspected during normal business hours at NPI's principal office detailed above and is set out in full in a Circular which is being sent to members and policyholders of NPI.
 - Any member entitled to vote at meetings of NPI is entitled to appoint another person (who need not be a member of NPI) as his proxy to attend at the Extraordinary General Meeting and, on a poll, vote instead of him.
 - Forms of proxy and the power of attorney or other authority, if any, under which they are signed, or a certified copy of such power or authority, should be returned to arrive not later than 11.00 a.m. on 17th May 1999 at NPI, PO Box 6352, London N1 1XT (by post) or at Electoral Reform (Ballot Services), Independence House, 33 Clarendon Road, London NE8 0NW (by hand). The lodging of a form of proxy will not prevent a member from voting in person at the Extraordinary General Meeting, if he or she wishes to do so.
 - It is important that members intending to vote personally bring with them to the Extraordinary General Meeting the letter accompanying their form of proxy or failing that, details of their policy number(s) and some means of identification. Holders of proxies should bring with them to the Extraordinary General Meeting details of the policy number(s) in respect of which they have been appointed proxy and some means of identification. On arrival at the Extraordinary General Meeting, please register with the officials who will be at the door. Registration will commence at 9.30 a.m.

Notice of the Annual General Meeting National Provident Institution

NOTICE is hereby given that the 163rd Annual General Meeting of Members of National Provident Institution ("NPI") will be held at The Wembley Conference Centre, Empire Way, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 0DW, on Wednesday 19th May 1999 at 11.30 a.m. or, if later, immediately after the conclusion (or adjournment) of the Extraordinary General Meeting of NPI convened at 11.00 a.m. on that day, for the transaction of the following ordinary business.

Resolution 1. To receive and adopt the Accounts and Report of the Directors for the year ended 31st December 1998.

Resolution 2. To reappoint as a Director, Mr P W Moore, who has joined the Board since the last Annual General Meeting.

Resolution 3. To reappoint as a Director, Mr J J H Wormell, who is retiring by rotation.

Resolution 4. To reappoint as a Director, Mr L J Martin, who is retiring by rotation. Notice is given under Rule 46 (1)(b) of NPI's Rules that Mr L J Martin will attain the age of 70 years on 20th April 1999.

Resolution 5. To reappoint as a Director, Mr D J M Roberts, who is retiring by rotation.

Resolution 6. To reappoint as a Director, Mr A D Lyons, who is retiring by rotation. (Mr Wormell, Mr Martin and Mr Roberts are members of the Remuneration Committee)

Resolution 7. To consider the following resolution, special notice having been received of the intention to propose the resolution as an ordinary resolution: THAT PricewaterhouseCoopers be reappointed Auditors of the Company (having previously been appointed by the Board to fill the casual vacancy arising by reason of the resignation of Coopers & Lybrand), to hold office until the conclusion of the next general meeting at which the accounts are laid before the Company and that their remuneration be fixed by the Directors.

Principal Office:
55 Calverley Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN1 2UE

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
Steven O'Brien
Secretary
12th April 1999

- NOTES:
- Any member entitled to vote at meetings of NPI is entitled to appoint another person (who need not be a member of NPI) as his proxy to attend the Annual General Meeting and, on a poll, vote instead of him.
 - Forms of proxy and the power of attorney or other authority, if any, under which they are signed, or a certified copy of such power or authority, should be returned to arrive not later than 11.30 a.m. on 17th May 1999 at NPI, PO Box 6352, London N1 1XT (by post) or at Electoral Reform (Ballot Services), Independence House, 33 Clarendon Road, London NE8 0NW (by hand). The lodging of a form of proxy will not prevent a member from voting in person at the Annual General Meeting, if he or she wishes to do so.
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 - If you would like a copy of NPI's Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 1998, please write to Steven O'Brien, NPI, Box 45, National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2UE.



PROVIDING PENSIONS SINCE 1835

Euro woes should come as no surprise

On the face of it, the first 100 days of the euro have thrown up many dramatic surprises. In all important respects, however, the past three months have been entirely predictable.

Many anticipated that the euro would be a strong currency in its early days, bolstered by massive flows of investment funds out of the dollar and backed by a European Central Bank that would keep a tight grip on monetary policy to build up its credibility. However, the euro has been more or less permanently weak.

This is not a surprise. It was evident, even as the single currency was born, that Europe was suffering just like others from the implosion of demand in emerging markets. Weak economies tend to result in weak currencies; that is the beauty of floating exchange rates, designed as they are to act as a natural restorative when things go badly.

Far from helping to bolster the euro, the refusal to cut rates by the ECB until it was far too late, again predictably, was counterproductive.

When economies become as evidently weak as parts of euro-land — particularly Germany — have become, a policy of tight money undermines, rather than bolsters, the currency.

What we have discovered about the euro over the past 100 days is that it goes up and down according to economic circumstances. It is not unusually gifted just because of the weight of parental expectation at its birth. It is, in short, a currency like any other. The current period of weakness is no more proof of the euro's failure than a bout of strength would have signified its success.

Some are shocked and dismayed by the evident weakness in the German economy. They should not be. The vulnerability of an uncompetitive Germany in the face of falling world demand was perfectly obvious before the euro was launched. It is now common

currency (excuse the pun) to talk about the explosive possibility of Germany having to leave EMU some way down the road in order to rebuild its competitiveness. Like Britain with the exchange-rate mechanism, it looks as if Germany has fixed its currency at far too ambitious a level, but cannot devalue.

Germany is doing its best to squeeze through another emergency exit by pushing the case for wage harmonisation (as well as tax harmonisation). It knows that it cannot persuade its partners to inflate their wages to German levels of kindness. So it is, with breathtaking *chutzpah*, trying to push through wage equalisation by arguing, quite speciously, that this is necessary to make monetary union and the single market work.

The truth is that if Germany is to get out of the hole it has dug itself (or that has lovingly been prepared for it by Paris), it has to undertake



serious structural reform of its economy, and fast. Some optimists saw the dramatic departure of Oskar Lafontaine as the necessary removal of an important hurdle to reform. However, there is little sign that Hans Eichel is any more likely to dismantle the European social welfare state or reform labour markets than his predecessor.

In a pamphlet published by New Europe, the lobby group, next week, Professor Sir James

Ball says: "The need for sweeping deregulation in Europe as a critical factor in obtaining maximum benefit from the single currency remains unrecognised officially at the highest levels."

So the economics of euro-land look as alarming as ever, but what about the politics? The past three months have confirmed that the European Commission, unelected and unaccountable, was riddled with bad management and sleaze. The fact that the whole Commission was forced to resign and the fact that Romano Prodi this week took a scheduled flight to London and rode a London taxi rather than a limousine does not necessarily signify an effective clean-up of Europe's civil service. New Europe would warmly welcome recent events if that were the case.

Since the euro was launched, at least one thing has become clearer. The single currency was al-

ways designed to be a Trojan Horse for a United States of Europe, but at least that is now an openly stated aim.

Newcomers Herr Eichel and Signor Prodi are unashamed federalists. A majority of British people do not like the idea of a federal Europe and, judging from conversations I have had since New Europe was launched, this opinion has only hardened since January 1. However, the new candour at least shows the British people more clearly what they will be voting for if they vote to join the single currency.

Would that Tony Blair and his Government were courageous enough to admit this reality and let the British people have an honest debate about whether this is what it wants or not. If Mr Blair wants to be at the heart of a federal Europe, why doesn't he have the courage of his convictions and

say so? He is entitled to his view like the rest of us.

This is the most important question determining the future identity of our nation. Yet the Government slyly obfuscates the choice to be made and pro-euro voices trivialise the single currency question, telling us, *inter alia*, that because we eat pasta and enjoy going to Tuscany on holiday, we can safely glide over all the complex and painful realities of life in euro-land.

By doing so, they feed suspicion of the grand European project felt by many British sceptics, and amplify calls in some quarters to give up on Europe altogether — and that is not what most of us want. The euro was pushed through in much of Europe without proper discussion, and many ordinary people are already regretting that. Whatever the ultimate outcome, let us do better than this in Britain.

Janet Bush is director of New Europe, the anti-single currency lobby group. European Single Currency A Bad Idea is available for £5 from New Europe, 53 Walnut Tree Walk, London SE11 6DN.

Marketing man's Olympian feat of crisis management

BUSINESS

By Jason Nasse

Many people have difficult jobs. One would not like to be a recruitment consultant for Barclays or a spin-doctor for Saddam Hussein. However, few can have had a more difficult time over the past few months than Michael Payne, the marketing director of the International Olympic Committee.

The 41-year-old Englishman has had a crash course in crisis management. It started when the Asian economic crisis spilled over into the Australian economy, so bringing the jitters to sponsors, broadcasters and suppliers for the Sydney Games, which take place next year.

Then the IOC had a public falling out with IBM — the computer giant that has been an Olympic sponsor for more than 40 years — over the costs of technology for the Salt Lake City winter games in 2002. IBM claimed that the IOC wanted too much technology for too little money, while Payne said that IBM's terms would have bankrupted the Salt Lake Games. The result was that IBM's relationship with the IOC "was terminated".

That had hardly calmed down when stories began to emerge about gifts being given to IOC by the organising committees of cities wanting to host the Olympics. This led to a chorus of calls for the resignation of a large proportion of the Games governing body, including the President, Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Last month the IOC acted to defuse the crisis. Ten committee members were either fired or resigned; an ethics committee was set up with independent members including Javier Perez de Cuellar, the former UN Secretary-General, and



Worthy of a medal: Michael Payne, the IOC's marketing director, has been dogged by problems at almost every turn

Howard Baker, the former White House chief of staff; the IOC decided it would issue audited annual results, as befitted a multibillion-dollar organisation; and a reform commission called IOC 2000 and boasting such luminaries as Henry Kissinger and Peter Ueberroth, who ran the Los Angeles games in 1984, was formed.

And just as the dust settles and Payne sets out from his office in Lucerne to sell the IOC's plan to the most difficult audience of all — the business community which has invested around £10 billion in the Olympics over the past two decades — he faces the rug being pulled from underneath him. A US Senator, John McCain, has proposed a motion in that the IOC's tax-exempt status should be withdrawn. McCain has argued that the endemic corruption of the IOC, if not reformed, makes it unworthy of the tax advantages it enjoys. Taking away the IOC's tax-exempt status could increase the costs of sponsoring the Olympics by 40 per cent — no doubt making many organisations think again.

The motion is being debated

today and though Payne claims to be confident that the US Senate will reject McCain's proposal, he is worried about the matter. "Of our 11 partners (the core sponsors of the Olympics, who pay a minimum of £30 million each games for the honour), nine are US based," says Payne. "If the Senate created this tax situation, it would put US corporations at a disadvantage to European or Japanese companies. I don't think this would be popular in the business community."

Payne has decided against travelling to Washington for the debate. As the deep bags beneath his eyes testify, he has enough on his plate.

His biggest headache at the moment is in the form of an urban, outspoken insurance salesman called David D'Alessandro. D'Alessandro is the president and chief executive officer of the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company of Boston, one of the US's largest financial groups and an IOC partner. He is also a vocal critic of what has been going on at the IOC, calling for

President Samaranch's resignation and that of Phil Coles, a member of both the IOC and the committee organising the Sydney games who admitted that his ex-wife had received jewellery from people associated with Athens' unsuccessful bid for the 1996 Games. (Both are still in office.)

While other sponsors have either been silent or — in the case of Kodak, at least — supportive of the IOC's reforms, Mr D'Alessandro has taken the Olympic rings off John Hancock's advertising and literature and has threatened to hold back payments, arguing that corporate sponsors would be tainted by association with an organisation that did not have clean hands. "They lied to us," Mr D'Alessandro said in an interview last month. "They told us the scandal would be put behind us. But their version of the reform doesn't appear to be anybody else's."

Payne does not want to be caught in a slanging match with one of his sponsors, but he indicates that D'Alessandro may be grandstanding, while talking a less abrasive line behind the scenes. "No sponsor

has withdrawn and no sponsor has asked to renegotiate its terms," Payne asserts. "We have over 40 multinationals involved in sponsoring the Olympics in one form or another. Only one company out of those 40 has chosen to speak out."

Indeed, in the midst of all this uproar, Payne has been able to sign a series of new sponsorship deals. The first was with Sema, the Anglo-French group which took over at least part of IBM's role as technology partner — encouraged to be Sun Microsystems — is due to be announced in the next few weeks, which would leave one vacancy, as the IBM role has been split into three to make the task more manageable.

Coca-Cola and Time Warner have both signed on as partners for another four years, and Payne claims he is close to announcing deal with four more partners. Kodak and UPS are almost certain to resign and, with most sponsorship experts certain John Hancock will walk away, the key will be whether Visa International and McDonalds continue

their association with the Olympics.

Payne admits that the Sydney Games is about £100 million short of its sponsorship target, and given that the games are only 15 months away this shortfall is now unlikely to be made up. However, Payne says the target was always unrealistic, having been increased by the Australian government twice after Sydney met previous targets.

"The total amount raised from sponsorship and broadcasting, but before ticket sales, is running at around A\$2 billion (about £800 million) for Sydney," says Payne. "This is close to what was raised with ticket sales for Atlanta."

As for the Salt Lake City winter games in 2002, again there is a shortfall — running into hundreds of millions of dollars — and again Payne says it is not the IOC's fault. He points out that US\$500 million (about £315 million) has been raised in sponsorship and US\$750 million in broadcast income — double the amount for the last winter games at Nagano. "Where are they spending the money?" he asks.

The tempting answer is that much of it has gone back to IOC members in "gifts". Both the Sydney and Salt Lake City Games have been tarnished because of the background to how the cities secured the Olympics. However Payne argues that previous Olympics suffered worse problems — such as doping scandals, terrorist attacks and boycotts — yet were successful. "If the games are good, most of this will be forgotten," he claims, perhaps more in hope than expectation.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Firms with rates problems need to take prompt action

From Mr Bruce Jones
Sir, I feel it necessary to write to correct a wrong impression that might have been drawn by your readers from the article which appeared on April 6 under the headline "Companies urged to appeal against rates".

The article seems to suggest that there is something inherently wrong with the majority of rating assessments and that firms should therefore appeal against them. I have no means of checking the figures quoted by Fletcher King in respect of appeals that they have been involved in. I can, however, tell you that reductions in total rateable value as a result of settled appeals amount to considerably less than half of the 17 per cent quoted.

If firms are concerned to do something to get their rates bill right, the current review being undertaken of rateable values to take effect from 2000

provides an opportunity for ratepayers to avoid the appeal process altogether. What they need to do is to make sure that we at the Valuation Office have any relevant information about their rents now rather than waiting until the new rating lists come into force on April 1, 2000.

Ratepayers should respond to requests for information promptly and carefully, and if they are in any doubt as to what is required the local valuation officer, whose telephone number appears on all correspondence, will be pleased to help. It is in everyone's interests to make sure that the new rating assessments are right from the start.

Yours faithfully,
BRUCE JONES,
Director Business Development,
Valuation Office Agency,
New Court, Carey Street,
London, WC2A 2JE.

Pep deadlines should be reviewed

From Mr Barry Tuckwood
Sir, Despite allowing ample time for delivery, I am common with thousands of others, have had contributions to personal equity plans returned because of delivery delays combined with the ruling of the Inland Revenue that Pep providers cannot use the franking on letters as evidence of the date of sending. Overall the delay and this ruling must have prevented

the investment of millions of pounds.

This was not, surely, the intention of the (then) Chancellor when the rules on Peps were developed.

The current Chancellor should review this situation as a matter of extreme urgency. Yours faithfully,
BARRY TUCKWOOD,
75 Lower Camden,
Chislehurst, BR7 5JD.

Tax bracket

From Mr John Deas
Sir, The Government seems to think that a tax by any other name will smell sweeter. The detailed terms of Lloyds Bank's share individual savings account state that interest on any cash balance will be

credited "net of a 20 per cent, non-reclaimable Inland Revenue charge, which is levied by the Government as part of the tax regulations". So that's all right — it's still tax free, then? Yours faithfully,
JOHN DEAS,
5 Woolston Drive, Alsager,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 2PL.

Fare play

PETER HAMBRO, a well-known name in gold circles and scion of the merchant banking family, is starting a pressure group for businessmen aggrieved by falling standards on British Airways. Hambro, who has mines in Siberia and southern France and is a regular flyer, says the service on BA has "gone to hell" since the ever-popular Robert Ayling took over the running.

He is trying to recruit members for the BA Full Fare-Paying Passengers Association. Hambro is far from the first person to complain — BA has

run into regular flak for poor service. A recent experience was typical, he says.

"I paid £440 for a round trip to Paris," he says. "When I got to the check-out on my way home, the lady there was hopelessly rude. I said: 'Mr Ayling wouldn't like that', and she said: 'I don't care. I hate Mr Ayling'."

A fax to Ayling elicited no response. "They don't seem to care at all about the businessman who is a regular traveller," he says.

WELCOMING yesterday's deal with RJB, Graham Brown of National Power said it provided "flexible and secure coal supplies in an increasingly competitive market."

John Battle, Energy Minister and in Venezuela at the time, thought the deal provided "flexible and secure coal...". And so on. It is beyond belief that both men said the same thing simultaneously, an ocean apart, so it must have been scripted by the government spin-doctors. One expects this sort of thing from politicians, but they really should be told by the likes of National Power to keep their soundbites to themselves.



Hat trick

I AM normally pretty immune to the London Marathon, but one banker has found a novel way of raising money this weekend. Tom Attwood at mezzanine finance house Intermedia Capital Group is auctioning the logo on his running hat, the cash to go to Children with Leukaemia. Bids, now running into four figures, close on Friday afternoon.

Francis Mackay of Compass and Granada's Gerry Robinson have already been outbid by Civen's Robin Hall.

Attwood, 46, has never run before and started training in January. I ask how long he expects to take. "About four and a half hours," Blimey. Tom, I could walk it in that.

Bank error

A FORMER Lazard's banker is favourite to succeed the disgraced Edith Cresson at the European Commission in Brussels. Anne Lauvergeon took over in 1991 from Jacques Attali as Francois Mitterrand's right hand and was headhunted by the Paris office of Lazard's four years later.

She does not seem to have enjoyed the experience and lasted about two years. Oddly enough, no one at Lazard's today can think of much to say about the tenure there of someone who is about to become one of the most powerful women in France.

SHAREHOLDERS at Corporate Services Group have finally persuaded their board to stand down. One director is Tim Holland-Bosworth.

Back in 1992 Holly-Bolly, as he is known, was at Kleinwort Benson working for Alan Sugar in the latter's bid to take Amstrad private on the cheap.

Holly-Bolly upset the institutions when he admitted that Kleinwort stood to gain substantial fees if this was successful. Some unkind souls even suggested that this called the independence of Kleinwort's advice into question.

The coincidence has not been missed by some of those

same institutional investors who find themselves rang up against him again today.

Hurt feeling

HARVEY WEINSTEIN, one of the two star moguls behind Miramax, maker of *Shakespeare in Love*, came barreling out of the Savoy yesterday surrounded by an asteroid belt of acolytes and flunkies. "Get me out of here!" Weinstein shouted to one. He then, quite unaware, swept past John Hurt, who was having a quiet coffee. Surely you remember Allen? The Elephant Man? They have short memories in Hollywood.

MARTIN WALLER
city diary@the-times.co.uk



Harvey Weinstein: Brief non-encounter at the Savoy

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Equities achieve record close

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	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Scapa sells division for £329m in revamp

BY PAUL ARMSTRONG

SCAPA GROUP, the manufacturer of industrial products, yesterday unveiled a comprehensive restructuring involving the £329 million sale of its core paper businesses and plans to off-load a second division.

The moves will enable Scapa to focus solely on its technical tape operations, for which it says that growth prospects are far brighter than those for its operations in the hard-hit paper industry.

Announcing the sale, Scapa said that the performance of its paper division, which generates more than half the company's profit, would have continued to deteriorate under its ownership.

The company expects the sale to fund a special dividend of 50p a share after eliminating the company's remaining debt of £130 million.

David Dunn, chief executive, said that Scapa also planned to sell its speciality materials division within a few months, possibly leading to a second return to its shareholders.

Mr Dunn said that the tapes businesses were generating a return on capital of about 30

per cent, compared with 15 per cent for the paper division.

Scapa's paper division, which makes paper clothing for specialist industries and services the rolls in paper machines, was responsible for the company's initial development.

However, Mr Dunn said that the industry was suffering from excess capacity and needed to follow the pattern of consolidation adopted by its customers in the paper and packaging industry.

He said that Voith, the family-owned German paper company that is buying the businesses, was better placed to cope with the challenges facing the industry.

"This is a mature business, it is not a growth business," Mr Dunn said. "The paper companies want to do a better job for themselves and put price pressure on their suppliers."

Investors responded immediately to news of the payout, marking up Scapa shares by 27p to 144p.

The stock slid from 220p in June to a 12-month low of 90p in January on the back of the tough trading conditions being suffered by the paper division.

Mr Dunn said yesterday that the environment remained difficult and was not expected to improve in the short term.

Shareholders will be asked to approve the sale on May 5, and the dividend is expected to be paid in early July.

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TONY ANDREWS

Peter Black able to walk tall after 15% profits rise

BY MATTHEW BARBOUR

PETER BLACK, the maker of toiletries, cosmetics and shoes, yesterday proved itself to be one of the few suppliers currently benefiting from close ties with Marks & Spencer after unveiling a 15 per cent rise in full-year profits.

The group, which specialises in supplying shoes and accessories to M&S, also said that it expects trade with the retailing giant to increase over the coming year. A number of clothing suppliers to M&S, which issued a profits warning after a disastrous autumn, have announced job cuts. Peter Black, however, provides products in which M&S has only a 10 per cent market share, as opposed to clothing, where M&S has a share of up to 35 per cent.

Stephen Lister, chief executive, said: "We sell 45 per cent of our products to M&S, a figure we hope will grow. They can't and won't give more space to clothing and so we're in a totally different position to the textile people."

For the year to January 31, the group reported pre-tax profits of £21.8 million (£16.2 million) on sales up 13 per cent at £196 million.

Mr Lister said that as well as diversifying away from producing slippers and plastic bags, about 60 per cent of production is now sourced from outside the UK, with factories in India, Italy and Thailand.

Black's figures were also lifted by the inclusion of Ferrosan UK, a maker of herbal remedies, which contributed £18.5 million of sales. With interest cover of ten times and low gearing, Mr Lister said the group is on the lookout for further acquisitional growth opportunities.

On adjusted earnings per share of 23.6p (21.4p) there is a final dividend of 3.25p, raising the full-year dividend to 10 per cent on a pro-rata basis.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Severn Trent calls for price increases

SEVERN TRENT has proposed a 5 per cent cut in water bills next year, but said that prices would have to rise over the following four to pay for the Government's clean-up programme. Severn Trent yesterday said that after an initial £11 off for the average customer, bills would have to rise by 1.5 per cent per annum above inflation from 2001 to 2005 to finance an investment programme of £2.3 billion.

The company, which supplies eight million people in the Midlands and Wales, said improvement work was needed at 65 water treatment plants and for the rehabilitation of 1,200 miles of water main. All the water companies are presenting business plans to Ofwat, which is due to respond by July, with a final decision on prices and funding by November.

Torday revives payout

LONG-SUFFERING shareholders in Torday & Carlisle are to receive their first dividend in seven years as the reconstituted company said it would be making a payout of 0.5p for the year. Torday, formerly an engineer, now sees itself as strategic industrial investment company — last year it raised £6 million in the market to finance small acquisitions and the taking of small stakes in undervalued businesses. The company made pre-tax profits of £1.34 million (£1.37 million) in 1998.

Mulberry warning

SHARES of Mulberry, the AIM-quoted luxury goods group, crashed further yesterday as it said that losses were likely to be worse than expected and that there will be no dividend. The company said: "Export sales in the last quarter have been materially below expectations with difficult trading conditions in Europe and the Far East." Analysts believe that losses for the year are likely to come in at £2.2 million. The shares fell 8p to 26½p, off from a high two years ago of 21½p.

Cirqual still upbeat

CIRQUAL, the aerospace, telecoms and building engineer, struck an upbeat note yesterday despite reporting a 20 per cent downturn in pre-tax profits to £4 million at the interim stage. Tony Gartland, chairman, said: "While there have been selective price pressures, continuing improvements in efficiencies have reduced the overall impact." The company is paying an unchanged interim dividend for the six months to March 7 of 4.1p on earnings per share of 9.88p (12.01p).

P&O property sell-off

P&O, the company that recently said it is to concentrate on its shipping interests, yesterday reported that it had sold some US property assets for £53.9 million. The company said it had sold Lenox Park, an urban business park consisting of three office blocks plus land in Atlanta, Georgia, to BellSouth. P&O said the price was above the book value of the assets in the company's accounts. P&O sold other Atlanta property investments last year when it unwound its joint venture with Chelsfield.

TIMES
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Pressac aims for takeovers

BY ROBERT COLE, CITY CORRESPONDENT

PRESSAC, the telecoms equipment and automotive parts supplier, aims to make acquisitions to extend strong growth.

The company last year paid £62 million for G Cartier, a French auto-components maker, and held a rights issue to fund the deal. Huw Lewis, finance director, indicated, however, that Pressac was unlikely to seek to raise further equity finance to fund any deal. He said that interest rates are low enough to make debt a better source of finance.

At January 31, Pressac had debts equivalent to 82 per cent of net assets. However, the group said that gearing was at a peak. Mr Lewis added: "We have quite a bit of capacity in our balance sheet for debt."

Geoff White, chief executive, said that a purchase costing

about £30 million would interest the group, but emphasised that there was no immediate prospect of sealing an deal.

The re-affirmation of Pressac's expansionist aims came as the company reported a rise in profits in its six months to January 31. Pre-tax profits were £5 million, up from £4.5 million, but Pressac incurred £1.7 million of exceptional charges in the period. Underlying operating profits were 50 per cent up, at £6.7 million. Most of the growth was attributed to the new contribution from G Cartier.

Earnings per share, including the exceptional cost, fell from 4.36p to 3.64p. The interim dividend is 1.14p (1.06p adjusted for the rights issue).

Tempus, page 26

Cannons shares shoot up

CANNONS GROUP, the fast-growing health and fitness club operator formerly known as Vardon, saw its shares gain 8½p to 197p on the back of an upbeat trading statement (Dominic Walsh writes).

At its annual meeting yesterday, Nick Irens, chairman, said that membership had risen 15 per cent to 82,000 in the three months to March 31, with growth coming both from existing and new clubs. He added: "The market for health and fitness continues to grow and the future for the group is exciting."

The sale of its attractions business, including the London Dungeon, has left the group cash positive and it is planning to invest £115 million over the next three years. Six clubs are scheduled to open in 1999 with another five in the pipeline for 2000.

US recovery helps Smurfit

BY PAUL ARMSTRONG

SHARES of Jefferson Smurfit Group jumped nearly 13 per cent yesterday after the international packaging company unveiled a better than expected profit result and said that the US market would continue to drive a price recovery.

Smurfit reported pre-tax profits up 14 per cent last year to £171 million (£145 million) on the back of a 12 per cent lift in sales to £1.29 billion.

The strong result, and the prospect of further improvement, is some of the brightest news to emanate from the embanked paper and packaging industry over the past year. Excess capacity in most markets has combined with the Asian economic crisis to squeeze margins as manufacturers compete for business.

However, Smurfit said yesterday that the US market should record a drop in net capacity this year and growth in global capacity would remain at, or below, 1.4 per cent.

The company said that the increasing strength of the market was highlighted by the price rises that were implemented in the US in February, which is considered a soft month for the industry.

A total dividend of 14.8p was declared, a rise of 3.6 per cent. Analysts said that the outlook for Smurfit's share price was encouraging. "We have had a fairly positive trading statement for the first time in a long time and I think the stock will probably move ahead in the coming weeks," one analyst said. The shares closed 16p higher at 142p.

Barclay brothers set to sell Howard

BY DOMINIC WALSH



London's Howard hotel, which is expected to fetch £38 million

THE Barclay brothers, whose interests include the Ritz hotel and The Scotsman newspaper, are poised to sell the Howard hotel in London to a US real estate investment trust (REIT) for £38 million.

The prospective purchaser is believed to be MeriStar, a so-called "paper-clipped" REIT that is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. It was created last year through the merger of American General Hospitality and CapStar Hotel Company, focusing exclusively on the hotel industry.

Speculation over the future of the 153-room Howard has swirled since the reclusive Barclay twins acquired the Ritz in

1995 for £75 million. The brothers are understood to have been canvassing interest for almost two years, although it is only recently that a deal has appeared likely.

Millennium & Copthorne Hotels is one of several groups to have expressed an interest in recent months. At its recent results, M&C admitted that it had been keen to acquire the four-star property but said that it had been put off by the price.

A spokeswoman for MeriStar said last night: "We are looking at a number of deals in London and elsewhere but we have nothing to announce." She admitted that

the Howard was the type of hotel MeriStar might be interested in. However, she said that it was more interested in securing management contracts, possibly with a small equity investment, rather than outright acquisitions.

MeriStar is effectively two entities "paper-clipped" together and with shared directors. MeriStar Hospitality Corporation is the tax-efficient REIT, owning about 120 hotels in the US and Canada, many of them Hiltons and Sheratons. The operating company is MeriStar Hotels & Resorts, which manages more than 215 hotels, half of them owned by the REIT.

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	Gross Rate		AER	
	Old	New	Old	New
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Current Account with Cash Management Option*				
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£20,000-£49,999	2.50%	2.25%	2.52%	2.27%
£5,000-£19,999	2.00%	1.75%	2.02%	1.76%
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TESSA	5.25%	5.00%	5.35%	5.09%
Charity TESSA	4.73%	4.50%	4.81%	4.58%

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- "Gross" is the rate of interest before the deduction of Income Tax at the rate required by law.
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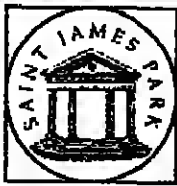
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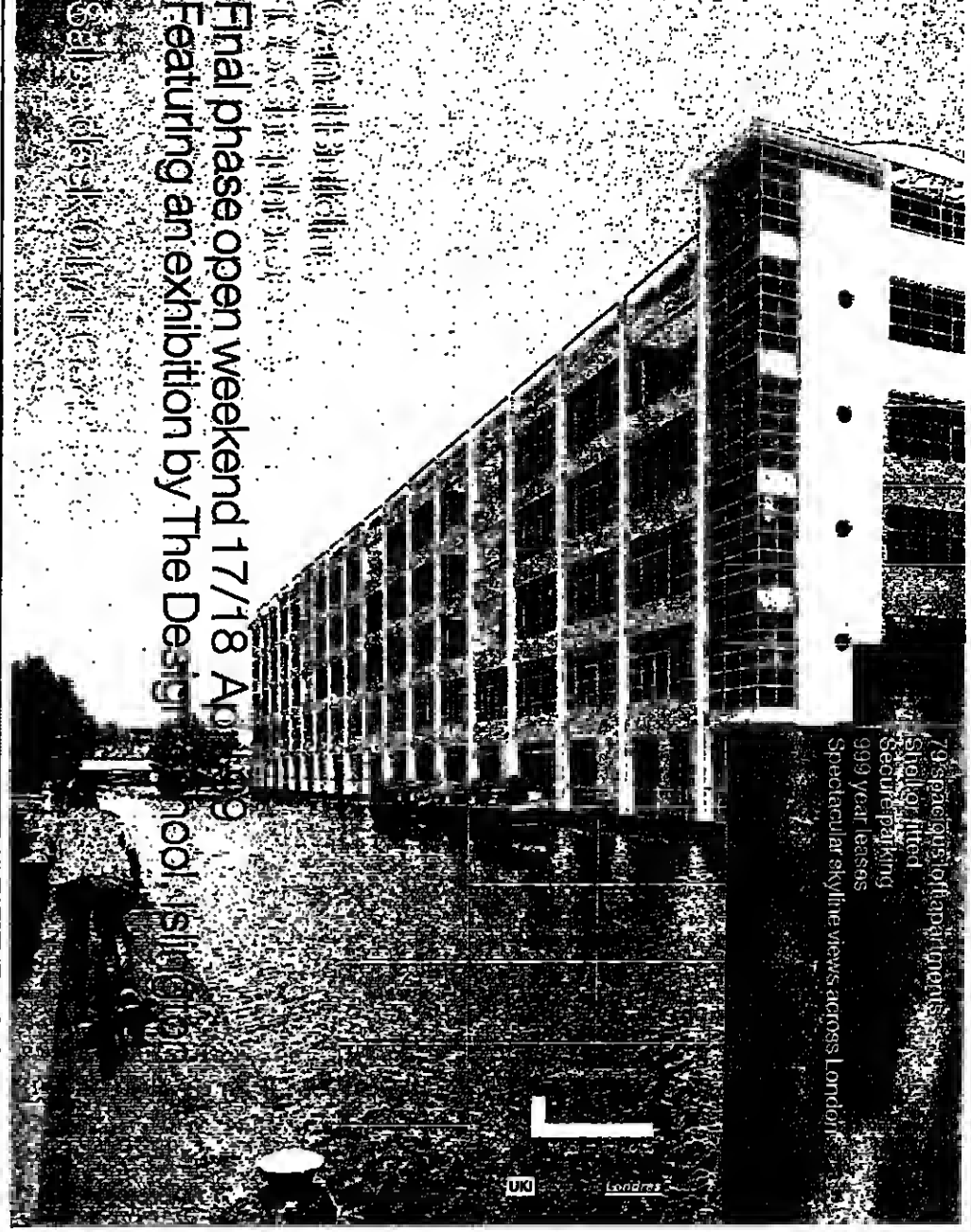
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As a creditor unhappy with the way the supervisor was approaching Mr Goodman's proposed variation to the individual voluntary arrangement, Mr Raja was with-

The judge had been wrong against costs on an indemnity basis against Mr Raja who had not acted improperly in availing himself of the opportunity presented by the Act to apply to the court. Costs should be on the standard basis.

Lord Justice Clarke delivered concurring judgment.

Solicitors: Bowling & Co, Peckham; Edwin Coe; Ralph Davis.

that the removal of resale price maintenance from proprietary medicines would result in more chemists going out of business more quickly, reducing the number of outlets for both prescribed and proprietary medicines; further, that there would be a substantial loss of outlets for less frequently demanded proprietary medicines, all to the detriment of the public; see *In re Medicaments Reference* (No 2) (at pp310e et seq 323d-g).

The court was obliged to consider them both individually and collectively, as two or more changes might become material if, taken together, they could affect the balance of detriment, albeit that one alone might not.

There was enough prima facie evidence of material changes for to be in the public interest for the court to revisit the matter.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor
Cameron McKenna

it was by sections 14 and 17 of the 1976 Act, the precise standard of evidence required to establish a particular contention had to be left to the good sense of the tribunal. On the result of the *prima facie* evidence

test was that evidence from a respondent, however interesting, was unlikely to be helpful at the leave stage.

But the court had concluded that the removal of ressell price maintenance from proprietors' medicines would result in more chemists going out of business more quickly, reducing the number of outlets for both prescribed and proprietary medicines further, that there would be a substantial loss of outlets for less frequently demanded proprietary medicines, all to the detriment of the public; see *In re Medicaments Reference* (No 2) [at pp303e to see 323d-g].

Evidence in support of the Director-General's application was largely to be found in *Materiae Chemicarum in the Medicaments* by Ken Sings and published by the Office of Fair trading in January 1998, which identified eight principal changes.

The court was obliged to consider them both individually and collectively, as two or more changes might become material if, taken together, they could affect the balance of detriment, albeit that on alone might not.

There were no prima facie evidences of material changes for to be in the public interest for the court to revisit the matter.

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Abstract pioneer at the RA

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Who was John Tunnard?

The audacious dash to abstraction

VISUAL ART: Richard Cork finds Kandinsky's reckless energy barely contained at the Royal Academy

Of all the painters who revolutionised art in the early 20th century, Vasily Kandinsky was the most headlong. With an audacity that still seems courageous, he decided to jettison all references to the world of appearances. Around 1912, Kandinsky embarked on a voyage into an abstract universe. That heroic journey, and the pictorial discoveries he made there, had a profound effect on the future course of Modernism. He was a liberator, and the finest exhibits from that period charge his Royal Academy exhibition of works on paper with an impassioned, surging energy.

Kandinsky took a surprisingly long time to arrive at such boldness. In his native Russia, he had studied law and was expected to enjoy an outstanding career as an academic teacher. But with a recklessness as vehement as his later pursuit of Abstraction, he rejected legal studies in 1896 and decided to train as an artist in Munich. Already 29, Kandinsky was older than his fellow-students. And for a while he followed a nostalgic course.

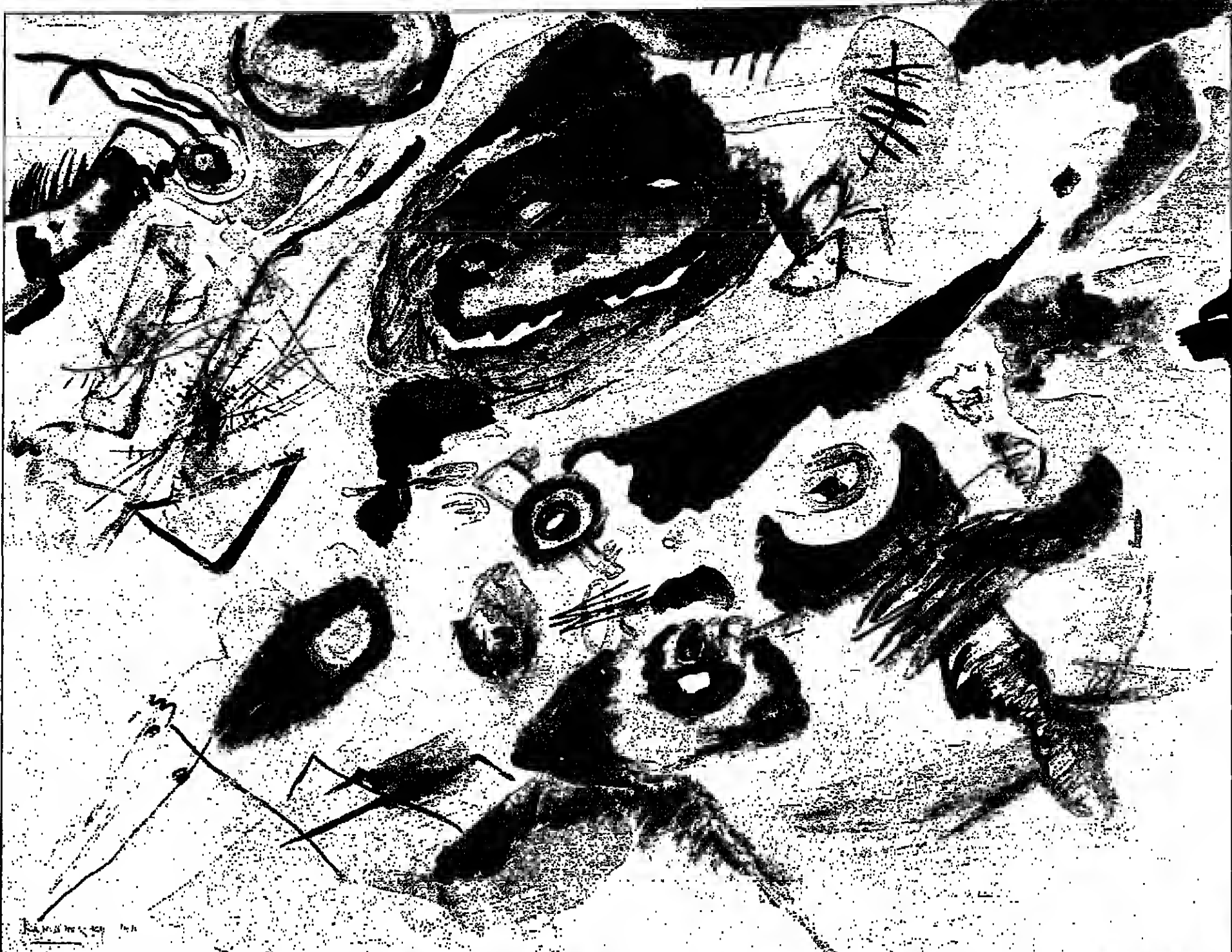
The earliest exhibits in the RA show are fuelled by the urge to escape into fairytale fantasy. They resemble illustrations for children's stories. Sometimes he is guilty of an artfulness bordering on whimsy: in a preposterous sketch for a poster advertising a French brewery, a lavishly plumed lady pours beer into a froth-filled glass with risible theatricality. But other images from this difficult, formative period show a greater toughness. One picture in particular, a gouache and crayon work called *Night*, seems prophetic. At first, the blanched and melancholy maiden comb-

ing her undulating tresses in this mysterious scene appears to have strayed from a latter-day Pre-Raphaelite painting. In reality, though, she derives from an ancient Russian tale about Baba Yaga, a malevolent witch who extends a crooked blue finger from the right side of the gouache. Kandinsky shows her coaxing a small boy to leave his flaxen-haired sister and wander into the countryside. The moonlit flowers, trees and meadows are reduced to a sequence of simplified, fluently brushed forms. Barely identifiable, they announce the strangeness of the dream-like visions Kandinsky would soon place at the centre of his work.

In 1908, the year after *Night* was executed, he became more singleminded in his urge to overhaul the language of Western art. With Gabriele Münter, a young painter he had met during their student days in Munich, Kandinsky began spending his summers at Murnau in the Bavarian Alps. The sublime landscape helped to stimulate him, and before long he became a powerful force in the avant-garde groups then galvanising new German art.

By now in his forties, the Russian expatriate seemed an unlikely figurehead for innovation and revolt. Impeccably dressed, Kandinsky never lost the air of pedagogy he had acquired during his university days. But the work he now produced was the opposite of academic. Like the crusaders who impel their galloping horses forward in his 1903 gouache, he became a man with a messianic mission.

The equestrian image haunted his imagination, turning into the rider who hurtles across an impetuous colour



Classic Kandinsky: his 1913 *Watercolour with Red Spot*, painted while the artist was preoccupied with the notion that the imminent war would open the door to spiritual renewal

woodcut called *Lyrical*. The contours of both man and mount, stripped of all superfluity, have become almost skeletal. Their dynamism reflects

the spirit of The Blue Rider, a group dedicated to broadcasting radical initiatives in art through exhibitions and publications. Kandinsky, who had

played the cello in his Muscovite youth, found enormous stimulus in music. He included Schoenberg's paintings in a Blue Rider show as early as 1911, and both men were heartened by the discovery of their shared concerns. Musical influences helped to convince Kandinsky that art should claim the freedom to detach itself from representing visible appearances. He wanted to go far beyond the surface of things, and acknowledged his debt to music by giving his 1913 book of coloured woodcuts the exclamatory title *Klänge* (Sounds). The images within this exuberant album can be counted among Kandinsky's most joyful and unfettered achievements.

Kandinsky devoted much of his formidable energy to a series of ebullient images each called *Improvisation*. But some of the watercolours displayed here prove that even the most rapturous of his abstractions were underpinned by intensive preparation. *Study for Composition VII*, a seemingly impetuous canvas of 1913, shows how carefully he planned these eruptive images. The amount of elaborate calculation lying behind Kandinsky's major paintings of the period in no sense diffuses their exhilaration. The greatest oils he produced then are among the high points of 20th-century art, and no London gallery has ever mounted a substantial exhibition of Kandinsky's convul-

sive achievement during those years. But the 1913 *Watercolour with Red Spot*, a classic example of his work on paper, shouts out its forcefulness with overwhelming conviction from the Royal Academy's walls.

For all Kandinsky's wild modernity, these images derive much of their fervent power from his religious beliefs. His most influential theoretical defence of Abstraction, published in English in 1914, is titled *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. And many of his works are obsessed with the Resurrection, the Flood or the Last Judgment. The prospect of an imminent apocalypse unleashed the most oratorical side of Kandinsky's complex temperament. In common with other European artists, he became preoccupied with the notion that wholesale renewal would be attained only after equally thoroughgoing destruction.

Hence his uncanny ability, in some of these turbulent watercolours, to anticipate the annihilation that engulfed Europe in the latter half of 1914. Kandinsky welcomed the declaration of war at first, regarding it as a necessary purgative. But he was forced to leave Germany, first for Switzerland and then Russia. His art lost

its overriding impetus during these years of exile. And the death at the Front of young painter-friends soon persuaded him to deplore the conflict.

Some of the images he produced in 1915 and the following year, most notably the fractured *Watercolour with Black Lines*, reflect a more tragic mood. His marriage to Nina Andreevskaya in 1917 was

darkened three years later by the death of their young son Volodya. The ebbing of Kandinsky's experimental appetite is demonstrated by his alarmingly tepid and conventional *View of Moscow*, which lapses into the kind of feeble naturalism he had formerly abhorred. As for the militant artists who came to prominence during the Russian Revolution, they regarded Kandinsky as a bourgeois individualist.

Their antipathy persuaded Kandinsky to leave Russia for good in 1921 and accept Walter Gropius's invitation to teach at the newly formed Bauhaus. The prospect of progressive art and architecture allying to forge a new society appealed to a painter who had always been fired by the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a grand coming-together of the arts. To my eyes, though, his

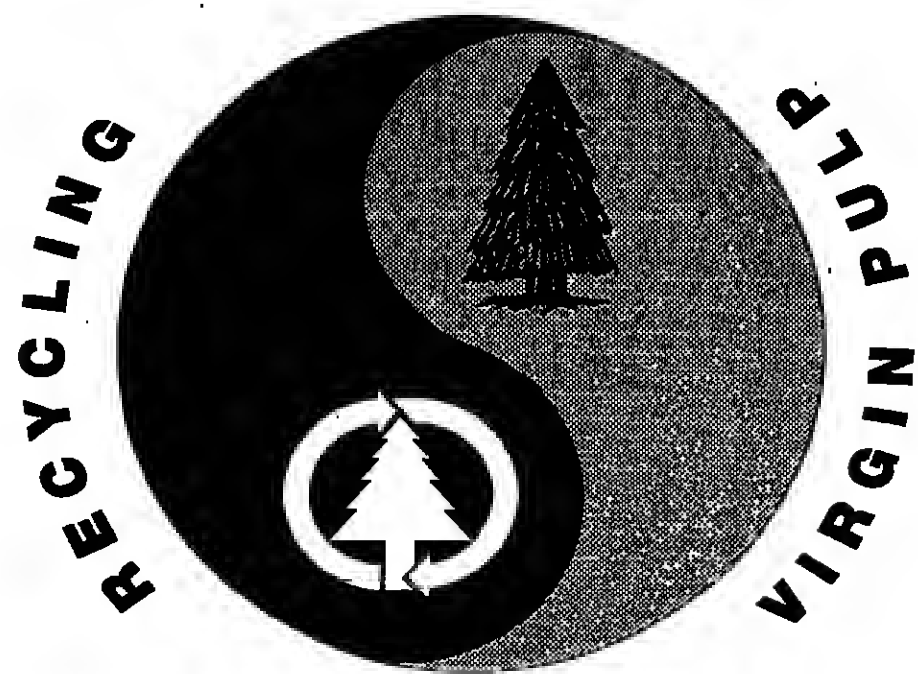
work as a teacher had an increasingly detrimental effect on the art he produced. Kandinsky recovered his belief in the viability of Abstraction, becoming a prolific, thoughtful and inventive exponent of a language freed from the need to represent. But a new emphasis on neatness and geometrical order drains his work of its former dynamism. Heavily reliant on compasses and a ruler, he retreated from the impassioned, sensuous impulse dominating his finest prewar work. Kandinsky never succumbed to formula: a 1928 watercolour called *Weighing* is a new departure, setting circles and rectangles free to float in a cosmic equilibrium. It seems, however, tasteful and bland after his earlier risk-taking.

There is no sign, in the closing phases of the show, of an artist enjoying a supremely fruitful late phase. He continued to try new ideas, even after settling near Paris for the last decade of his life. But the apparent sprightliness of a work like the 1937 *Line with Accompaniment* cannot disguise its fundamental tidiness and caution. Kandinsky's yearning for apocalyptic renewal, which gave his earlier work its rousing ardency, had expired on the battlefields of the First World War. However diligently he tried afterwards, the old sense of adventure could never be fully recovered.

● *Kandinsky at the Royal Academy* (0171-300 5760/1) until July 4

‘His later work seems tasteful and bland’

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Peter Potworowski (1898-1962) was one of those artists unfortunate enough to fall between two cultures — in his case Polish and British. It is surprising how often this makes a radical difference to an artist's standing and reputation: the fact of belonging wholly to no nationality in particular inhibits both sides from staking claims. Potworowski was born and began his training in Poland, left for Paris in 1924 and studied there under Leger, and did not return to Poland until 1930. When the Germans invaded he was forced to leave, arriving in London in 1943. In England he was an influential teacher, mainly at the Bath Academy, and exhibited widely, with the London Group and elsewhere.

In 1958 he moved back to Poland, but for the Poles he was never really a Pole, and in Britain his reputation trailed off when he was not there to nurture it. Fortunately now we have a major rediscovery show, consisting mostly of his later British oils and watercolours. He paints people in landscapes or interiors, with a unique delicacy of colouring, unifying all elements into patterns of subtle harmony. He appears to have been influenced a little by Bonnard, on whom he was an expert, but the final effect is totally different. If a painter who fits into no pigeonhole can be tolerated, he thoroughly deserves a second look. Connaught Brown, 2 Albemarle Street, W1 (0171-408 0362), Mon-Fri 10am-6pm, Sat 10am-12.30pm, until April 30.

AROUND THE GALLERIES

□ IT IS not for nothing that the catalogue essay for Spink-Leger's latest exhibition is headed 'Who was John Tunnard?' Tunnard (1900-71) was in fact quite a figure in his day: he had connections with the English Surrealists and, later, the artists who gathered round Nicholson and Hepworth in St Ives; he did one of the most prominent and memorable murals in the Festival of Britain. But ultimately he saw things in his own terms, and never really fitted in with anybody. Hence, like Potworowski, he is impossible to pigeonhole, and still suffers for it, being not so much underestimated as unestimated.

The tide began to turn two years ago, with the publication of a major book on him, and this small but distinguished show should do nothing but improve his standing. The works in it date from between 1938 and 1969: none of them, oddly, from the period which seems particularly his. All of his works, indeed, look at a glance as though they belong to the Festival of Britain style, all spindly lines, streamlined shapes, and the excitement of television equalled only by the thrills of space flight. Many of his pictures have a faintly science-fictional air, with mysterious, almost abstract shapes hovering somewhere in outer space, parts of a new technology we vaguely recognise but do not attempt

to understand. Thus the earliest paintings look like bold anticipations, the later curiously retrograde. But all, indubitably, belong to Tunnard alone. Like him or not, he is definitely an artist to be reckoned with. Spink-Leger, 13 Old Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 3538), Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm, until April 23.

□ Peter Ilsted was the brother-in-law of Wilhelm Hammarsholm. Which to many is probably like confidently announcing 'For the Snark was a Boojum, you see'. But if you know that Hammarsholm was one of the great masters of the second Golden Age of Danish art in the 1900s, specialising in crepuscular interiors humming with a mysterious intensity, even though frequently unpeopled, then the connection makes a lot of sense. Ilsted was less mysterious, more human, and, to be honest, not in any way as good. But that is comparing him to a great artist, which he never claimed to be. In his own terms he has much to offer, especially in his mezzotints. Each print was individually hand-coloured, to beautiful, elusive effect. Lumley Cazalet also has some charming oils, but it is the prints that constitute Ilsted's most individual contribution. Lumley Cazalet, 33 Davies Street, W1 (0171-491 4767), Mon-Fri 10am-6pm, until April 23.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

حکومت الامم المتحدة

RUGBY UNION

Offers flood in for Quinnell's robust service

BY MARK SOUSTER

Thugwane champion

Austin Healey, who ended an eight-week suspension by sitting among the Eogland replacements for the international against Wales last Sunday, will return to action this evening in the hope of returning to the Leicester XV to play Saracens in the Allied Dunbar Premiership on Saturday. Healey, who was banned after a stamping incident concerning Kevin Puff, of London Irish, will play for the Leicester second XV against Loughborough Students.

World Cup. "Winning the competition is a realistic expecta-

However, Macqueen is also pleased with the progress of two other fly halves — Christian Warner and Nathan Spooner, of New South Wales and Queensland respectively. If their Super 12 form remains strong, they should get the nod ahead of Howard.

BOWLS: END OF AN ERA AS ENGLAND STALWART CALLS IT A DAY

Advancing years prove Bell's final toll

■ **GOLF:** Lee Westwood's post-tournament celebrations at the Masters caused him to miss his flight to his next tournament, the Macau Open, which starts tomorrow. Westwood's 20-hour journey will hardly be ideal preparation for the Macau event.

The questions of whether bowls is a spectator sport and whether slow play should be penalised arise whenever it

Chipping Norton won through 15-13 and were joined in the semi-finals by Stanley, Blackpool Borough and Grantham.

Results, page 41

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

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YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Newmarket

[illegible]

4.15 (6) 1. LIONHEAR
2. Sertorial (D) Hollan

[illegible]

Going: soft, heavy after
1.45 (71) 1, Pussy Gal

Green God (7-1), 3. Full Spate (4-1). Wars
5-2 lav. 10 ran. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$, 4 O Elsworth Tote:
£6.50, £2.10, £2.70, £1.10. DF. £22.90.
£24.90

A black and white photograph showing a large, dense crowd of people, likely participants in a protest or demonstration. The individuals are packed closely together, filling the frame. The image is somewhat grainy and has a high-contrast, historical feel.

100

2.15 Wadi	3.55 Jo
2.45 Zulal (nb)	4.25 Co
3.20 Mundo Raro	4.55 Me
	5.25 Op

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM
DRAW: 5F, HIGH NUMBERS BEST

215

7213 SCARBOROUGH SELLING
(£2,164: 1m 100yrs) (17 runners)

1 1532 ARKONYA 13 (D.F.G.) G M Moore 7-9
2 6081 BATHMAN 14 (M) G 5-12
3 0166 BERT 14 (D.F.G.) G M Moore 6-9
4 3000 DETROIT CITY 14 (C.L.S.) B 5-9
5 -004 GENUINE JOHN 13 (D.F.G.) J Pantes 6
8 5243 MR ROUGH 60 (D.F.G.) D Morris 8
7 3863 NOBBY BARNES 156 (D.F.G.S.) Emico

8 060 PINE RIDGE LAD 8 (D.F.G.) J L Har

9 0 000 UNM HARRY 32 (R) R Hollnagel 6-9
10 6-03 WADZ 13 (G) G McDout 4-9-12
11 0-00 PRECLES 61 (G) M Prenz 4-9-12
12 1220 THE WILLOW 14 (D.F.G.) S Winton 1
13 8200 THE WILLOW 14 (D.F.G.) S Winton 1
14 1300 THE WILLOW 14 (D.F.G.) S Winton 1
15 -008 EASTLEIGH 26 (D.S) R Hollnagel 1
16 -0 RUSSIAN ROSE 117 M Britons 4-9
18 0005 TOWNSHVILLE CEE CEE C Woodward
11 50-0 THE WAP BALANCE 31 J Pantes 3-8
5 1 Wad. 8-1 THE WAP BALANCE 31 J Pantes 3-8

0.45

2.45 WITHERNSEA HANDICAP

(3-Y-O: £2,960; 176 yds) (16)

1	203-	OPEN ARMS	176 yds	A King 9-7
2	055-	COLLEGE DEAN	9 yds	J O'Neill 6-1
3	081-	KENTUCKY BULLET	18 (T.D.S)	M Jo
4	30-1	LITTLE AMIR	15 (0.5) 9 yds	Barbell 8-2
5	8-10	PRIDEWAY	18 (0)	A Bailey 9-2
6	5-10	ZULU	12 (0.5)	Devolet 8-2
7	016-	BIG AL	270 (0)	Rice 9-2
8	010-	ALTO	170 (0)	Riches 197 (y)
9	0-03	MILETTO	13 E	A King 9-2
10	011-	DIAMANTE	13 E	Tilson 9-1
11	205-	LUCY MARABELLA	178 G	A Batters 8-1
12	1-5	OUR SECRET	9 yds	M Thompson 8-1
13	0-01	OUR SECRET	225 (0)	170
14	5-00	RED CHARGER	15 (0.5)	6 yds
15	0-00	BUTTERSCOTCH	13 E	8-2
16	0-00	SHARP LOVE	9 yds	M Ryan 8-2

8-2 Little Amir, 8-1 Zulu, 7-1 Kentucky Bullet, 8-1 10-1 Unloved Riches, 8's Our Secret, 12-1 others.

320.....

02.20 LEONFOLIO CLASSIFIED
(£8.00) 71 100yds) (8)

1 004- GRANGEVILLE 179 (D.S.) | Building 4
2 124- MURDO RARO 165 (D.S.) | 61-62
3 005/ GENERAL ACADEMY 165 (D.S.) | 61-62
4 40-5 LATALONIA 20 (P) & Elton 5-6
5 00-0 TOWN DUGAL 18 (C) & Smith 4-9
6 33-5 YULARA 2 (C) & 6 Meeson 4-13
7 41-0 PRINCE TOWN 2 (C) & 6 Elton 4-13
8 33-1 SERPENTINE 20 (D.S.) | 61-62
5-2 Grangeville, 9-2 Serpentine, 11-1 3-Mile Road
Yulara, 7-1 River Tiers, 10-1 Latalonia, 14-1 General

COURSE SPECIAL

TRAINERS | J Gooden, 4 winners from 18 runners,
from 122, 22, 37; Mrs M Reveston, 15 from 10, 18, 16,
18, 9% | Barry, 21 from 120, 17, 5% | M Wade, 5%.

JOCKEYS | J Swanton, 4 winners from 15 rides, 22
191, 19, 9%, C Lovell, 7 from 40, 17, 5% | M Harte
191, 15 from 116, 12, 9% | J Weaver, 15 from 11

9

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1033-1038.

3.55 HUTTON CRANSWICK MAIDEN AUCTION

[illegible]

GM1, 10-1 Ours For Life, 12-1 Jolly Green, Lauren, 14-1 others.

4.25 HUTTON GRANSWICK MAIDEN AUCTION

STAKES (Div 1) 2-V-0 22.373:50 013

1	VALENTINES VISION N	Lundgren 6-10	T.G. McLaughlin 9
2	JOHNSONS TALE 9 ANGELA L	King 8-9	A. Day 03 13
3	11 HAWKINS	11 HAWKINS	11 HAWKINS
4	CORREYS AND SAMS 14	W.G. Turner 8-9	F. Papp 6
5	SAMMY DUDRUE 8	Parkley 6-5	N. Whitten 03 13
6	WALLS WINDSOR 13	2 AGONY 8-9	2 AGONY 8-9
7	HAPPY TIMES 15	M.W. Easterby 8-3	T. Lucas 1
8	IN THE MICK J	Berry 8-3	X. Darcy 5
9	RED LINDLING	8-5	T. Dale 4
10	DESERT SANGRIA 13	A. Eason 8-1	M. Henry 7
11	DIAMOND LACE 11	Brittan 7-12	D. McInerney 63 13
12	SHIRAZ LILLY 11	W. Hume 8-9	W. Hume 8-9
13	DESERT HAVEN 11	M. Healey 8-12	T. Williams 18

2-V-2: 2-Xc 8-1: Jancers, Tale 9, Walls Whips, Desert Sang, 7-1 In The Mick. 6-1 Cowboys And Jancers, 11-1 Desert Haven, 18-1 others.

4.55 BRIDINGTON BAY HANDICAP

(3-Y-0): E2.889: 1m 31 216yd) (12)

1	05-1	SCOTCHMAN 14 (S)	G A Butler	9-7		F F Gen 5
2	05-2	11 LSE 11	Woods 5-1			G Outlets 5
3	05-3	SCOMP 183 (G)	S. K. Smith	1-1		Cornell 10
4	05-4	11 LSE 11	Woods 5-1			Cornell 10
5	00-0	SADDLERS GLORY 14 (F)	Charters 8-11			I Granten (7) 5
6	00-1	11 LSE 11	Woods 5-1			Cornell 10
7	00-2	SCOP WINDOW 177	T 1	1		A Outlets 5
8	5-63	CORAL REEF 9 (W)	M E Turner	8-2		A Day 3 (3)
9	00-3	00-3	00-3			W. K. Smith 10
10	00-4	HE-LRNY 152 (W)	Coker 7-10			M. K. Smith 10
11	00-5	00-5	00-5			W. K. Smith 10
12	00-6	BOLD FELICITOR 198 (U)	M. K. Smith 10			N Carls 12
13	00-7	WEST LSE 198 R	H. K. Smith 10			F M Quinn (7) 5
14	00-8	PARSINGER 198 R	H. K. Smith 10			N Carls 12

9-4 CORAL REEF 9-12 Fly Like A Butterfly, 11-2 Coral Reef, 6-1 SCOP Window, 12-1 SCOP, 16-2 Disco Fly, 20-1 SCOP

6 25

5.23 HORNSHA CHANDLER

(E3,651: 1m 11 207yd) (10)

1	45-0	TOTTEN DANCER 32 (G)	J Eire 5-10-10	C Lander
2	40-0	EMPERE PARIS 31 (G)	1st 4-10-10	A Davley 7
3	40-0	NIGHT FLYER 30 (G)	J Hilds 4-7-10	M Henry 8
4	-011	TEN JEN 47 (F,5)	J Hilds 5-7-7 (Red)	P Maltby 6
5	40-0	CHERRY 30 (G)	1st 5-6-10	W Maltby 10
6	41-0	MARSHALL 29 (G)	1st 5-6-10	J Toller 4-9-10
7	40-0	KORNER 36 (G)	M Moore 4-9-10	J Lynch 5
8	40-0	CRIT 30 (G)	M Rensley 5-8-8	A Mower 10
9	40-0	SILVER GROOM 114 (F,1)	1st 5-6-10	A Maltby 5-7-13
10	16-0	VINCENT 37 J Hilds 4-7-10	A Maltby 6	5-9

5-4 Top Jams: 1-1 Silver Groom, 6-1 Korner, 7-1 Toller Dancer, 8-1 Night Flyer.
 Joe Knight, 10-1 Marsha Madison, 12-1 others.

■ Redcar's most valuable asset, the £100,000 Com-

cast Tescote Two-Year-Old Trophy, has been brought forward two weeks to Saturday October 2 to avoid a clash with Champions Day at Newmarket and the bonus scheme for smaller stables re-introduced. If the winning yard houses only between one and three juveniles, then a further bonus of £100,000 will be paid: four to six two-year-olds will qualify for £50,000, and between seven and nine

earns £25,000.

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26

AY APRIL 14 1999
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CRICKET

England need to rethink batting tactics

FROM RICHARD HOBSON IN SHARJAH

PRACTICE matches ahead of an important tournament must always be approached with a degree of trepidation. Fresh difficulties can arise as easily as existing problems are solved. England arrived here less than a fortnight ago with a batting strategy for the World Cup firmly in mind, but they return home today with the form of the top order a matter for serious concern.

Even though earlier failures ensured that it would carry no bearing on the Coca-Cola Cup, the victory against Pakistan at the CBFS Stadium on Monday night provided considerable relief after seven successive one-day defeats stretching back to the Carlton and United series in Australia. Yet the 62-run win, however emphatic in the end, was gained despite another indifferent start.

In each of the four games against India and Pakistan, the finalists here on Friday, England lost their fourth wicket with the score below 100. Stewart, in particular, endured a lean tournament, scoring 42 runs from four innings. It is imperative that he spends time at the crease for Surrey before England gather at Canterbury on May 2 to begin training ahead of practice matches against Kent, Essex and Hampshire that precede the main event. He intends to play in at least one National League and one PPP Healthcare county championship fixture.

Our batting has not functioned as a unit and some people need runs under their belts," David Graveney, the chairman of selectors and tour manager, said. "Sometimes when we chase runs, the fragility of our batting becomes very evident, particularly when the opposition have top-class spin bowlers. We are not alone in finding it far more difficult to chase than to defend a total in the field."

England must decide how far to shape the batting order towards aggres-

sion in the first 15 overs, when only two fielders are allowed outside the 30-metre ring. Conditions helping seam and swing will militate against batsmen attempting to hit through the line and the selectors may revert to an orthodox batting order of Stewart, Knight, Hick, Thorpe and Fairbrother, rather than promote Flintoff or Ealham, when the World Cup begins against Sri Lanka on May 14.

Poor results in Sharjah reflected unease with the conditions and the handicap of batting second in the first three games. Some of the strategy, too, was questionable. To hold back Fairbrother to No 8 in the second game against India was a waste of the best one-day batsman in the side. The Indians assumed that he must have been injured.

Hoping to compete successfully against players at ease in extreme heat and experienced on low, slow pitches in the hope of stringing together a sequence of victories to raise confidence ahead of the World Cup always seemed to be over-optimistic. A second defeat by Pakistan might have removed all self-belief from a squad unhappy at the way the issue of contracts for the World Cup has been allowed to drift.

The assurance of Flintoff and return to fitness of Thorpe, who scored 79 and 62 in the last two matches, represent the most obvious benefits of the trip. Ealham recovered form to take four wickets on Monday, when he also scored an important 36, while Fraser returned to the side to restrict batsmen to three runs an over in the first half of the innings. Early fears that Mullaney might have to miss the World Cup because of a side strain have proved to be unfounded.

"To have stayed in England at the mercy of the weather would have been counter-productive," Graveney said. "It has been a chance to get together and build team spirit. Regrettably, as far as that was concerned, the on-going spat about contracts has not helped at all."

The discontent that simmered throughout the trip was unleashed on Tim Lamb when the chief executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) saw the players at the team hotel after the victory over Pakistan. The meeting lasted around two hours.

Although they seem certain to agree to the terms before the ECB deadline of April 26, it will be unnatural if resentment towards the board does not linger. As Graveney said, it has not been a happy squad going about its work.



Maiden voyage: Jane Saxton, left, and Evelyn Pond make history as they clap Justin Langer, the Kent opener, on to the pitch at Lord's

Lord's, ladies and gentlemen...

THERE was no need to panic after all. There was drama, but it came a couple of hours later than some of the cruder members might have imagined, when two claps of thunder chased off a snowstorm. Two hours earlier, with no more than a polite murmur of excitement, the 21-year male-only reign of the Long Room at Lord's came to an end.

Twenty-one women worshippers claimed their pews among the throng of a hundred or so in cricket's most famous cathedral. Little matter that the sky was slate grey and the game doomed to a soggy end. Most of those who came did so to soak up the atmosphere inside the pavilion, not the action on the middle.

They started early, determined to enjoy the day. A group of four women, all holding blue Middlesex membership cards, flashed cameras and wide smiles as they stepped over the threshold. "I've been in the pavilion before to watch a University match," Hilary Bruce said. "My husband is a member, so I came as his guest. But the doormen are much less begrudging this time; I think they must have been sent to charm school."

Sarah Potter on the day hairspray and pink tissues made it into the Long Room

Julia Northover, a pensioner from North London, was inside early enough to claim the autographs of some of her heroes as they skipped up the steps after practice. "I did the tour of Lord's once," she said, "but this is the first time I've been in to watch the cricket. I'm a Middlesex member and it's wonderful."

Even the umpires were touched

by some of the goodwill. John Harris and Tony Clarkson had to pose for photographs en route to the square as a tall woman laughed guiltily between them. If the no photography rule was being shamelessly broken, all other behaviour was strictly in keeping with the Victorian splendour of the surroundings.

It was too cold for even the most

hot-blooded female to disregard the dress code. There were no skintight leggings and not a bare shoulder in sight. Most women donned dark-coloured, conservative suits, though one bright red overcoat sent a zing of warm colour through the oil-painted reserve of the shrine.

Every layer was welcome for, outside, a face-slapping north wind soon brought heavy rain. Even Father Time had to swivel away from the white-clad figures below. "The folly of man," he seemed to be whispering behind his stooped back, "trying to play cricket in April!"

Sure enough, the covers were soon on. Members and their guests shuffled out of the Long Room. A few sought the haven of the "gentlemen only" bowlers' bar, others were happy to share beef baps and chit-chat in the Long Room Bar.

Spending a penny did not, however, come as easily as it should. There was not a sign in sight, but three new toilets were located eventually near the dressing-rooms. The pine seats, hairspray and pink tissues were damning evidence. Lord's has opened its doors to welcome the ladies — and survived.

Winter's tale a familiar one

LORD'S (first day of four; Kent won toss; Middlesex have scored 16 for one wicket against Kent)

SNOW, rain, bad light, lightning, thunder, a brief glimpse of sunshine — and hardly any cricket. For the opening day of the new season at Lord's, it would have been unwise to expect a great deal more (two Tennant writes). In the ten overs that were possible, Middlesex, who were put in to bat by Matthew Fleming, lost one of their openers.

Michael Roseberry, now back with Middlesex after four rather unproductive years with Durham, was bowled by a trumper from Headley when a restart was made in late afternoon. There was some watchful defence from Langer, but that was about all.

Kent have come up with a nickname for themselves in the forthcoming National League. The last side to do so, they are to be "Kent Spitfires" on account of the county's links with the Battle of Britain.

Butcher passes endurance test

BY GEOFFREY DEAN

THE OVAL (Gloucestershire won toss; Surrey have scored 124 for no wicket against Gloucestershire)

ANY reservations that Surrey's players held about a frosty week's physical training with the Royal Marines in March ought to have been dispelled at a raw, gate-swept and virtually deserted Oval yesterday.

"The hardship and foul conditions" of Lymington — in the words of the county's quarterly magazine — were ideal preparation for the 47-over endurance test that Mark Butcher and Ian Ward survived yesterday.

In beastly weather, where hail coated the outfield at lunch and fielders' whites flapped like sails in a force ten, the Gloucestershire players must have cursed the ill-fortune of Mark Alleyne, their captain, in winning the toss. The prospect of a stop-start day, with rain around, demanded an insertion, but so little did the ball seam on the flat, true pitch, and so ably did

Butcher and Ward play that a wicket never looked like falling. Not until the twentieth over was the bat beaten.

In short, it was far too cold for the ball to swing. Smith tried in vain to reproduce the lavish movement in the air of his last visit here two years ago, when Gloucestershire won comfortably. Lately, they have been Surrey's bogey team, with a thrilling victory against the odds at Cheltenham last year.

Butcher looked a class act in the earliest first-class century opening stand in the Oval's history. Only when he had reached 48 did he play and miss. He signalled his fifty with a tenth four.

Ward, his fellow left-hander, also hit some fine shots, driving solidly and pulling gamely. Fortunate to edge Ball just wide of slip when on 46, he reached a worthy half-century from 131 balls.

Harvey, the visitors' overseas signing, varies his pace deviously and it was with a slower ball that he nearly bowled Butcher in the gloom.

Champions get chilly reception

BY JACK BAILEY

CHELMSFORD (first day of four; Essex won toss; Essex have scored 91 for two wickets against Leicestershire)

START the championship on April 13 and you get what you ask for. It was a three-sweater, three slips and a gully sort of day, limited to little more than 30 overs by bursts of rain and hail. It was also a good toss to win. At least it meant that most of the Essex team could remain huddled in the pavilion at any one time.

While Essex did not exactly make the most of the occasion, Paul Prichard enabled the wooden spoonists of last year to make a creditable tilt at the champions. Furthermore, Prichard sailed comfortably past his highest championship score of last season — an almost unbelievable 24 — moving to his undefeated 43 with six fours, including some rasping square cuts and a short-arm pull off Chris Lewis to warm the blood.

It was a commendable effort, for he had to battle his way past an early period of

playing and missing against Michael Kasprzowicz, his team-mate in 1994, as well as combating the movement off the seam gained by Lewis.

For a long time, both he and Darren Robinson survived only precariously. James Whitaker, back from the knee injury that saw him miss every championship game last season, kept the Leicestershire warriors buzzing with determination during the four sessions of play.

Leicestershire achieved their first breakthrough in the eighteenth over. Lewis moved one away to Robinson and Paul Nixon did the rest behind the stumps. The next over saw Kasprzowicz rewarded for some good outswinging bowling, underlined by the fact that he was no-balling far too often.

The burly Australian had Ian Flanagan led before, half-forward and tentative. This saw the arrival of Stuart Law, the Essex Australian, who settled in with Prichard before all sorts of foul weather and bad light kept everyone in the pavilion for the rest of the day.

PPP Healthcare county championship

Essex v Leicestershire

CHELMSFORD (first day of four; Essex won toss; Essex have scored 91 for two wickets against Leicestershire)

ESSEX: First Innings
P. J. Prichard not out..... 43
O. J. Robinson c Nixon..... 0
N. Flanagan b Kasprzowicz..... 14
S. G. Law not out..... 21
Extras (b 4, nb 17)..... 21
Total (2 wickets)..... 91

LEICESTERSHIRE: D. L. Maddy, J. J. Sutcliffe, A. Hodge, B. F. Smith, J. J. Whitaker, T. P. A. Nixon, C. C. Lewis, J. M. Dalton, J. Ormond, M. S. Kasprzowicz, M. T. Brennan
Umpires: R. Juleen and R. Palmer

Middlesex v Kent

LORD'S (first day of four; Kent won toss; Middlesex have scored 16 for one wicket against Kent)

MIDDLESEX: First Innings
M. A. Roseberry b Headley..... 6
J. Langer not out..... 10
M. R. Parnham not out..... 16
Total (1 wicket)..... 32

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-48

BOWLING: Headley 5-1-13-1, Thompson 6-2-3-0

KENT: R. W. T. Kuy, E. T. Smith, T. Ward, A. P. Wells, A. Symonds, M. J. Walker, R. A. Marsh, M. V. Fleming, D. W. Headley, J. A. Thompson, M. M. Patel

Umpires: J. H. Harris and A. Clarkson

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-40, 2-45

BOWLING: Kasprzowicz 14-4-39-1, Lewis 13-2-36-1, Ormond 2-0-40, Dalton 10-4-0

LEICESTERSHIRE: D. L. Maddy, J. J. Sutcliffe, A. Hodge, B. F. Smith, J. J. Whitaker, T. P. A. Nixon, C. C. Lewis, J. M. Dalton, J. Ormond, M. S. Kasprzowicz, M. T. Brennan

Umpires: R. Juleen and R. Palmer

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-17, 2-184, 3-187, 4-190

BOWLING: Westwood 10-1-39-0, Shrobb 10-0-45-1, Saglam 10-0-40-1, A. Hodge 10-0-35-0, Shrobb 10-0-40-1, A. Hodge 10-0-35-0, Shrobb 10-0-40-1

Umpires: O. H. H. (Australia) and I. T. Robinson (Zimbabwe)

Essex v Gloucestershire

CHELMSFORD (first day of four; Gloucestershire won toss; Surrey have scored 124 for no wicket against Gloucestershire)

ESSEX: First Innings
M. A. Butcher not out..... 58
J. J. Ward not out..... 50
Extras (b 6)..... 6
Total (no wicket)..... 114

GLoucestershire: K. J. Barnett, T. H. Hancock, O. R. Hewson, M. W. Alleyne, G. N. Winkless, J. J. Harvey, J. N. Sneege, J. R. C. Russell, M. C. J. Ball, J. Lewis, A. M. Smith

Umpires: B. Duckless and J. F. Steele

NO PLAY YESTERDAY: Chester-le-Street: Durham v Worcestershire Old Trafford: Lancashire v Sussex

UNIVERSITY MATCH: Trent Bridge: Cambridge University 228 for 5 (G. R. Lovett) vs Nottinghamshire

One-day international

Coca-Cola Cup India v Pakistan

SHARJAH (Pakistan won toss; India beat Pakistan by six wickets)

PAKISTAN
Shahid Afridi not out..... 5

Sailed Answer c Judge b Agarwal..... 25

Wapichash Wasi c Judge..... 37

Juz Ahmed c b Kumble..... 8

Karamam-ul-Haq run out..... 4

Saim Malik c Dravid b Prasad..... 30

Moin Khan c Joshi b Judge..... 54

Waseem Akram run out..... 1

Moin Khan c Joshi b Judge..... 54

Saglam Mughal not out..... 7

Shahid Afridi not out..... 12

Extras (b 7, nb 5)..... 12

Total (6 wickets, 50 overs)..... 205

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-16, 2-24, 3-45, 4-50, 5-110, 6-163, 7-194, 8-220, 9-222

BOWLING: Prasad 10-0-45-1, Saglam Mughal 10-1-41-2, Kumble 10-3-27-1, Singh 10-1-25-0, Joshi 7-0-40-0, Judge 3-0-19-2

INDIA
A. R. Khurshida b Shrobb..... 5

S. Ramani run out..... 82

J. Langer not out..... 10

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Maud Khouri and Lily Khalil are the anchor pair in the Egyptian Women's Team. They are a very aggressive pair who bid boldly and play well. Maud brought in the small slam shown below at a recently played teams match and earned her team 12 IMPs.

Dealer South	N-S game	Teams
♠ A K 10 5 ♥ 10 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A 10 7 4 2	♠ J 9 4 3 ♥ 9 5 2 ♦ 1 6 3 ♣ Q 5 2	
W N E S		
♠ Q J 10 8 3 ♥ Q 10 8 7 ♦ K J 5	♠ Q 7 2 ♥ A 7 ♦ A 9 4 2 ♣ 9	

Contract: Six Spades by South. Lead: King of hearts.

South opened One Spade and West overcalled Two Hearts. North started with a cue-bid of Three Hearts showing a good spade raise but necessarily a heart control. Thereafter an aggressive auction led to the precarious slam.

Even if trumps divide evenly, there are only eleven top tricks: four outside the trumps, five trumps in the South hand and two ruffs in the North hand. One of the minor suits must be established. If the trumps are not so friendly something more will be required.

Recognising the need to start on establishing the clubs, Maud won the lead with the ace of hearts and played ace and another club, ruffing. A spade to the ace revealed the unfriendly break. Another club was ruffed, revealing that they were divided evenly. Now she played the ace and king of diamonds, discarding a

heart from dummy, and ruffed a diamond. This was the position:

♠ K 10 ♥ — ♦ — ♣ 10 8 7	♠ J 9 4 ♥ 9 5 ♦ — ♣ —
♠ — ♥ Q J 10 5 ♦ Q ♣ —	♠ Q 8 ♥ 7 ♦ 9 4 ♣ —

Now, with the lead in dummy, she played a club. East ruffed with the nine of spades, declarer overruffed with the queen, ruffed a heart with the ten of spades and played another good club. She has not yet lost a trick. If East ruffs low, she will over-ruff, and dummy's king of spades is her twelfth trick. On the other hand, if East ruffs with the jack, declarer will make the last two tricks whatever East returns.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

FAINHEAD
a. A mizen-mast sail

b. Gladness

c. An idiot

GODDARD
a. A goblet

b. A goblin

c. A hanging judge

FLAPDOODLE
a. A pancake

b. Food for fools

c. An equestrian manoeuvre

GLYCONIC
a. A lyric metre

b. A philosopher's disciple

c. Bitter-sweet

Answers on page 42

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Spanish leaders

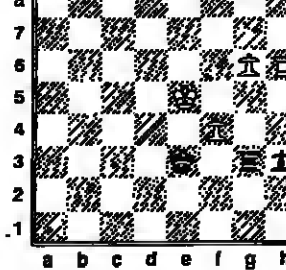
As the elite tournament in Dos Hermanas, Spain passes its half-way stage, Michael Adams, the British grandmaster, and Vladimir Kramnik, the powerful Russian, share the lead on 3½/5. After her win against Anand in the first round, Judit Polgar has plummeted with three losses, while Viswanathan Anand, widely tipped as a likely challenger to Garry Kasparov's world title, is utterly languishing with two losses and no wins. Today's game is Adams win against the veteran Korchnoi.

Writer: Michael Adams
Reader: Viktor Korchnoi
Dos Hermanas 1999

Ray Lopez

1. e4	e5
2. Nf3	Nc6
3. Bb5	Nf6
4. O-O	Ne4
5. d4	Nd6
6. Bxc6	dxc6
7. dxe5	Nf5
8. Qxd8+	Kxd8
9. Nc3	Nf6
10. Rd1+	Ke8
11. Nf3	Bd4
12. Ne2	Be7
13. B3	Nf5
14. Bg5	f6
15. exf6	gxf6
16. Bf4	Nd6
17. c4	Kf7
18. Re1	Bf5
19. Ng3	Sh7
20. Re1	Ne8
21. Rd1	Bd6
22. Bxb6	cd6
23. Rd2	Ng7
24. Rd6	Rd6
25. Rd1	Rd6
26. Rd2	Ke7
27. Rd6	a5
28. a3	a4
29. b4	b6
30. Nd4	c5
31. bxc5	bxc5

Diagram of final position



Keene online

You can send me your queries, puzzles, problems and games direct by e-mail. The address is keenechess@aol.com. The best contributions from Times readers will be published either here or in the Saturday Times Weekend column.

Correction

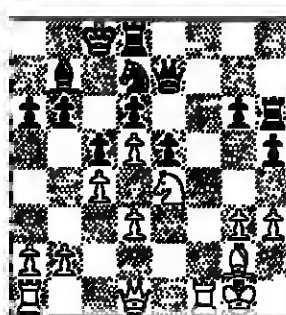
The diagram which appeared yesterday was a repeat of Monday's and did not show the final position of the game King v Pein.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Williams — Cherniaev, Hastings 1999.

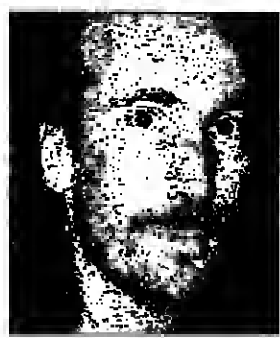
This appears to be a quiet middlegame position but in fact White has a clever tactic which wins immediately. Can you see it?



Solution on page 42

Painful legacy of sporting life

MIDWEEK VIEW



Simon Barnes
Sports Feature Writer
of the Year

I have decided on reflection not to run the London Marathon on Sunday. Life is too short, certainly too short to risk shortening it still further with the damaging effects of sport. The London Marathon has become an annual celebration of a deeply old-fashioned view of sport: the idea that sport is somehow good for you.

On the contrary, sport is extremely bad for you and those who most stridently push the claims of sport as something essentially good are those that seem most obviously to be suffering from the manifold and various curses that the sporting life makes inevitable.

I think, on this occasion, we will let Jim Fixx — the father of the modern running boom, who dropped dead on a run in his mid-50s — rest in peace this once. There is plenty of compelling evidence without revisiting the end of poor old Jim.

Just about every half-decent story we get on the sports pages is a celebration of the utter badness of sport. This week has belonged, in the face of hot competition, to the medical problems of José María Olazábal and his courage in overcoming them. The man was reduced to a shambling and, when no one was looking, crawling wreck. The problem was traced to his lower back, which is where golfers get damaged so often.

Ask Steve, if you don't believe me, or my brother-in-law, who was reduced for a period to house-bound immobility after a merry hack around the local course.

The on-again off-again story of the next seven days will revolve around the wounded knee of Zinedine Zidane. Zidane seems to be a man on the point of completing one of the great years of individual achievement in football, a World Cup win with France and now in pole position with Juventus in their European Cup semi-final against Manchester United.

He was forced to limp off half way through his weekend game and now faces what we traditionalists call "A Race Against Time" to get fit for the second-leg of the United match a week today. Zidane injured the knee shortly after



Damaged goods: Olazábal, front, Collymore, left. Merson and Zidane have suffered physical and mental wear and tear

the World Cup, then he did it again and now he has done it a third time. Clearly, the sensible answer is not to play football.

The psychological wear and tear is as extreme as the physical stresses. Players' minds and bodies are, like grand prix cars, stretched beyond the limits of reliability. So breakdowns occur again and again, every day. Poor old Paul Merson was in tears again last Saturday after a breathtaking performance as substitute. He stands as a living example of the problems of keeping normality and the sporting life in balance.

Stan Collymore, his club colleague at Aston Villa, is a now famous example of a footballer with mental scars. Ronaldo was under such severe mental and physical

'Few escape without some kind of long-running niggling, nagging ache'

stress that he had a fit before he took to the field for Brazil in the World Cup final. The world is full of damaged athletes.

Obviously, this is true for the professionals, who accept a life of great physical and mental stress in exchange for great rewards of money, fame,

glory and achievement. We ordinary chaps who do it just to keep fit are in a different category, but it doesn't stop sport being extremely bad for us.

Training for the London Marathon — Everyman's Everest — is a classic example. Road-runners generally damage the knee joints and will pay for it later in life.

No one has ever confused me with a professional athlete, but I sit before this word-processor a damaged person. Right arm never quite right — too much diving about as a goalkeeper and wicketkeeper, though I prefer to blame my one game of polo. And of late, I have been going through a period of some stress, and all to do with horses.

In fact, it is a relief to get away from the stresses of the

sporting life and get down to a bit of hard graft. Sport is an appallingly stressful business, for mind and body alike, no matter what level you do it at. Few escape without some kind of long-running niggling, nagging ache and those who participate in it seldom do so without worry and care.

And that's why we like it. That's why we do it, because the stresses excite, involve, lift us. Stress is something we actively seek. That is why so many people like playing sport and that is why we like watching it, the uniquely public and debilitating stresses of professional sporting life are what make people such as Olazábal and Zidane, Merson and Ronaldo, enthralling. Of course sport is bad for you. We wouldn't have anything to do with it if it was good.

TENNIS

Top names bring fizz to Stella event

By ALIX RAMSAY, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT

THE day-court season has hardly begun and already British thoughts are turning to the grass after Stella Artois announced the line-up for their traditional pre-Wimbledon event at Queen's Club. Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski will lead the British challenge, but their paths to the latter stages will be anything but clear with six of the world's top 11 men committed to play.

Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the Australian Open champion and world No. 3, leads the initial list of entrants, along with former Stella Artois champion, Todd Martin, conqueror of Rusedski during the Davis Cup in Birmingham two weeks ago, and Mark Philippoussis. Scott Draper, the defending champion, Michael Chang and Thomas Enqvist have also signed up.

Pete Sampras has, as is his wont, asked for a wild card to be reserved for him. He will leave his final decision about whether to play until the last minute, depending on his progress in the French Open.

This is the 21st year of the tournament and, with the millennium changes have been made. The young prospects of the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) Tour, such as Lleyton Hewitt, Marat Safin and Jan-Michael Gambill, will meet more experienced names, but while they have all either won a Tour event, beaten a top-five player or tasted glory in the Davis Cup, what they will make of grass beneath their feet remains to be seen.

For the first time, BBC television will screen all seven days of the event, while the centre court seating capacity has been increased to nearly 6,400. Should the weather be inclement a raincheck system is in place offering ticket-holders a full refund should there be less than two hours of play. At the rain-soaked 1998 event, refunds cost the organisers nearly £1.5 million.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 41

FAINHEAD

(b) Gladness and joy. From the Old English and Old Norse *fain* meaning chuffed. "Hit shall felle you with fainhead."

GODDARD

(a) A drinking-cup or goblet. From the Old French *godard*. A document of 1397 records "le grant godard de la cuisine".

FLAPDOODLE

(b) Food for fools. Cf. *fadoodle* something foolish or ridiculous, nonsense.

GLYCONIC

(a) Epithet of a lyric metre or verse, essentially a logaöedic tetrapody consisting of three trochees and a dactyl. Also (of a poem, stanza, etc.) composed or consisting of such verses.

SOLUTION TO WINNING MOVE

1 R7! Qxd7 2 Nxd6+ winning the queen.

Living for Las Vegas

Girls' Night
ITV, 9pm

As Julie Walters says to Brenda Blethyn at one point, this is like *Thelma and Louise* but to its credit, it's not too much like that particular exercise in feminine fantasy. Instead, Kay Mellor's film is a rather grimmer, more British affair. Best friends Blethyn and Walters share everything, even the six-figure jackpot at bingo which precipitates Walters leaving her husband to move in with the bingo-hall manager. Blethyn, meanwhile, pays off her mortgage but simultaneously finds that she has multiple cancers, for which the treatments seem worse than the fatal prognosis. Walters whisks her off to Las Vegas, where they meet rodeo-riding Kris Kristofferson, an apparent perfect last fling, thinks Walters, for Blethyn.

The Naked Chef
BBC2, 8pm

A new series from the makers of *Two Fat Ladies*. Jamie Oliver is a 23-year-old London chef whose presentational skills might be unpollished but whose skill and enthusiasm are undeniable. He may need prompting by an unseen female behind the camera, but his grasp of the essentials of cooking is clear. He eschews fancy names and time-consuming techniques to bring adventurous yet simple cookery within reach of the viewer, both the jaded and, more importantly, the young and inexperienced, who can be intimidated by the bland assurance of the monstrous regiment of telecooks. His is a natural manner which invites you in rather than dazzling you with expertise.

The Unseen Royal Family
ITV, 8pm

Not an exposé of the further reaches of the Civil List, mysterious cousins locked away in asylums or minor scions of unguessed-at hideousness, but a brisk trot through home movies, relatively rare footage of the Royal Family on parade or at ease, and eyewitness accounts of encounters with them. There's quite a bit about Diana, Princess of Wales.



Brenda Blethyn and Julie Walters head for Las Vegas in *Girls' Night* (ITV, 9pm)

but almost as much about the Queen, both as Princess Elizabeth and, touchingly, on her several visits to the stricken Welsh village of Aberfan. The Prince of Wales also gets a reassessment, as a decent sort, going out of his way to be fair and non-discriminatory. Some may feel that there is a little too much from Ivor Spence, a toastmaster and builer-trainer, but he's entertaining enough and he can genuinely claim to have had extensive acquaintance with the family of Windsor.

Leviathan
BBC2, 7.30pm

Now here's a funny thing, or at least it should be, preview tapes not being available at the time of going to press. Ahead of the 1999 London Marathon, a film report on the classical origins of the race, from the Battle of Marathon, 2500 years ago, to the modern Olympic Games. The presenter is Chris Eubank, the famously elegant former boxing champion, idiosyncratic of pronunciation and now revealed as a lover of both the warrior ethic and 19th-century heroic poetry. Also tonight: Steve Jones reports on the first experiments, in Des Moines, Iowa, in the 1920s, on genetically modified food crops. **Tony Patrick**

RADIO CHOICE

Melt/The End of the World
Radio 4, 11.30am/9pm

Today is not a good day on Radio 4 if you want to contemplate tomorrow with a smile on your face. Worse, there may not even be a tomorrow. This much can be inferred from the absence of a question-mark in the title *The End of the World*. So, it's a statement of fact, not conjecture. The only unresolved element in John Gribbin's investigation is not if universal apocalypse comes but how it will come. Several doomsday scenarios are offered, including being pulverised by a gigantic asteroid and being bankrupted by the greenhouse effect. Pete Lawson's noisy and frenzied comedy *Melt* opts for annihilation by nightmare heatwave in which Big Ben dissolves and becomes Little Ben.

Choice Chatwin
Radio 4, 9.45am

In the book world, the tenth anniversary of Bruce Chatwin's death will long be remembered for the huge, critical acclaim that has greeted the publication of Nicholas Shakespeare's biography of the travel writer and novelist. The radio world, too, must be rather pleased with itself. When Radio 4 planned its week of celebrations to mark the Chatwin anniversary, it couldn't possibly have known that it would be able to back in Shakespeare reflected glory. Six of Chatwin's tales — being broadcast this week and Shakespeare was selected as one of the quartet of readers. This morning, in an extract from *The Songlines*, he tells the story of a plucky aboriginal missionary, Father Flynn. **Peter Davall**

RADIO 1 (BBC)

6.30am Zoe Ball 8.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whitey 3.00pm Chris Moyles 5.45 Newsbeat 6.00 Dave Pearce 8.00 Steve Lamacq The Evening Session 10.00 Mowz Update with Mark Kermode 11.00 John Peel 12.00 Gilles Peterson 2.00am Mark Warren 4.00 Scott Mills

RADIO 2 (BBC)

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Richard Allison 12.00 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Ed Stewart 5.05 Johnnie Walker 7.00 Nick Hancock 8.00 Mike Harding 8.00 Gloria of Soul 9.00 David Hill 10.00 Chris Redden 11.00 Tom Paxton 11.30am Phil King 12.00 Lynn Parsons 12.00 Kaituna Leckie 3.00am Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE (BBC)

6.00am Morning Reports 8.00 Breakfast 9.00 Nick Campbell 12.00 The Midday News with Alan Robb 1.00pm Ian Payne 4.00 Drive 7.00 News Extra with Annie Webster 7.30 John Inverdale's Football Night Coverage of the night's big football matches. Plus, the National Lottery Draw 10.00 Littlejohn. No-nonsense football talk with European and domestic action 11.00 Late Night Live 1.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am The Big Boys Breakfast 9.00 Scott Chisholm & Sally James 12.00 Late Talk with Peter Dinklage 4.00 The Sports Zone 7.00 Side with Sebastian Lee 8.00 The Big Issues 10.00 James White 1.00am Ian Collins

VIRGIN

6.30am The Breakfast Show 9.30 Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00 Harriet Scott 6.45 Pete and Geoff 10.00 Gary Davies 1.00am Richard Allen 4.00 Phil Kennedy

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air with Petroc Trelawny, including a review of the new production of *Candide* at the Royal National Theatre
8.00 Masterworks with Peter Hobday, Greg (Peer Gynt Suite No 1); Mozart (Adagio and Fugue in C minor, K546); Bartok (Piano Concerto No 2)
10.30 Artist of the Week: Moore Lympany
11.00 Sound Stories: Architects Peggy Reynolds remembers Palladio
12.00 Composer of the Week: J.C. Bach
1.00pm The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert: Anna Polzella, soprano; Greg (Los reguicados; Cocoloco en la reja; El burlador de Sevilla; Quisiera a la mayra y al ruiseñor; El amor y la muerte; Epitafio; Goyescas) (n)
2.00 The BBC Concert Orchestra: The Orchestra of Wales, Mozart (Symphony No 46 in C, K425, Linz); Dvorak (Cello Concerto in B minor); Beethoven (Symphony No 8 in F, Pastoral)
4.00 Choral Evening from Turin Cathedral. Organist and master of the choristers Andrew Nelthorpe. Assistant organist Simon Morley
5.00 In Tune: Humphrey Carpenter's guests include the soprano Emma Kirkby
7.30 Performance on 3: Endless Parade (Sounding the Century) Live from the Hippodrome, Golders Green, London. Malcolm Binns, piano, Robert Cohen, cello, BBC Concert Orchestra under Barry Wordsworth. Arnold (Four Scottish Dances), Rawsthorne (Piano Concerto No 2) 8.15

Anglophilic. Foreign-born artists and thinkers choose their favourite examples of British achievements in the postwar arts: 8.35 Concert, part two, Bliss (Cello Concerto); Richard Rodney Bennett (Concerto for orchestra)
9.40 Postscript: Seamus Heaney at 60 (3/5)
10.00 The Piano: Piers Lane investigates the world of the piano past and present
11.00 Night Waves: Laura Cummin talks to the controversial art historian James Beck, whose new study of Michelangelo calls for a radical rethinking of the life and work of the Renaissance master
11.30 Jazz: Melissa Ayn Shipton presents the single Salena Jones with the Great British Jazz Band recorded as part of the Chichester Festival's Jazz Parade concert
12.00 Through the Night includes 12.05 Mozart (Overture: Così fan tutti) 12.10 Bach, reconstr. Koopman (Cantata No 190) 12.25 Otto Dutch (Overture: The Croatan Girl) 12.40 Szymanowski (Suite No 1 in D) 2.40 Graham (Hungarian Dance for piano duo) 3.55 Mozart (Symphony concertante in E flat, K364) 4.35 Mozart (Ballet music: Les petits riens, K299b) 5.10 Correll (Trio Sonata No 6) 5.25 Vivaldi (Symphony in A minor) 5.40 Ravel (Tzigane) 8.50 Schreker (Walse lente)

RADIO 4

5.30am World News 5.35 Shipping Forecast 5.40 Inshore Forecast 5.45 Prayer for the Day 5.47 Farming Today: Anna Hill presents 6.00 Today with James Naughtie and John Humphrys 8.35 (LW) Yesterday in Parliament Update on the latest political developments
9.00 Midweek with the Times columnist Libby Purves 9.45 (FM) Serial: Chloë Chatwin Extracts from *On the Edge of the World* See Choice
8.45 (LW) Daily Service
10.00 Women's Hour with Jenni Murray and guests includes Diary of a Provincial Lady
11.00 The Yellow Chair of David Pox Bowby explores the town's identity as one of the county's busiest ports
11.30 Melt: Pete Lawson's comedy about Londoners in the grip of a heatwave. With Dave Brooks and Katy Carmichael. See Choice
12.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast 12.00 (FM) News 12.04pm You and Yours with Mark Williams
1.00 The World at One with Nick Clarke
1.30 Points of Law: News. Popular legal quiz, chaired by Richard Evans
2.00 The Archers: Yesterday's edition (n)
2.15 Afternoon Play: Answitwinnin Charlotte Jones's uplifting comedy of friendship, loyalty and freedom, set in the 1920s and starring Sophie Thompson, Charlotte Jones and Marcia Waran (n)
3.00 Gardeners' Question Time (n)
3.30 A Head to Remember: Barbara Myers examines the life and work of anatomist Thomas Hodgkin, the man Hodgkin's disease is named after (3/5)
3.45 This Scripted Isle: Anna Massey narrates part 73 of the history of Britain (n)
4.00 Thinking Allowed: Professor Elen Barker discusses her research into the many facets of faith around the world

4.30 Case Notes: Graham Easton takes a look at the heart and circulatory system (n)
5.00 PM with Claire English and Chris Lowe
6.30 Six O'Clock News
6.30 King Street Junior: Jim Ebdidge's comedy drama set in a junior school. Runners spread race wildfire, creating a nightmare scenario for Mr Sims. Karl Howman stars (3/6) (n)
7.00 The Archers: The latest events from Arundel
7.15 Front Row: Mark Lawson reviews the National Theatre's new production of *Candide*
7.45 Diary of a Provincial Lady: Part eight of E.M. Delafield's household journal, dramatised by Jane Rogers. Broadcast earlier as part of Women's Hour (n)
8.00 The 1999 Rethx Lectures: Anthony Goldens. Director of the LSE, gives the second of five lectures, focusing on the difficulties of managing life. Introduced by Melt First (2/5)
9.00 The End of the World: John Gribbin invites experts to speculate on the probable causes of Armageddon. See Choice
9.30 Midweek Breakfast earlier (n)
10.00 The World Tonight: Justin Webb presents
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Archangeal: Alan Howard reads part eight of Robert Harris' thriller (n)
11.00 Late Night on 4: Old Harry's Game: Andy Hamilton's award-winning comedy, set in Hell, starring James Groux and Jimmy Mulville. Satan enters. Scumspaw's brain (4/6)
11.30 (FM) I'm Glad You Asked Me That: Official guide to modern living, with Michael Bywater, Sam Meo and Philip Pope (3/6) (n)
11.30 (LW) Today in Parliament: Political news
12.00 News 12.30am The Late Book: Barby Gregory's novel (n)
12.48 Shipping Forecast 1.00 As World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE: RADIO 1, FM 97.8-99.8, RADIO 2, FM 90.2-92.4, RADIO 3, FM 92.4-94.4, RADIO 4, FM 92.4-94.4, LW 100-102, VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.8, MW 1197, 1215, TALK RADIO, MW 1053, 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Penny Cleveland-Peck, Ian Hughes, Gillian Moxey, Jane Gregory and Barry O'Keefe

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ATHLETICS 38

The running men who will make the marathon a sprint

SPORT

WEDNESDAY APRIL 14 1999

SIMON BARNES 42

Why a sporting life can be bad for your health



Arsenal strengthened for replay

Petit returns from ban on red alert

By MATT DICKINSON

EMMANUEL PETIT insists that he will not opt out through his return to English football tonight, but then he has little choice. Only one team can survive the impact when Arsenal and Manchester United collide in their FA Cup semi-final replay at Villa Park, so there will be no time for the Frenchman to make gradual reacquaintance.

"Don't watch it alone," was Alex Ferguson's advice and the United manager's warning raises the question of whether this is the ideal stage for Petit to reappear after his third suspension of a fractured and fractious season. The Arsenal midfielder, as he admitted yesterday, is incapable of resisting a 50-50 tackle and there will be plenty of those against Roy Keane.

His desire to return has burnt so deep, though, that part of him secretly celebrated the 0-0 draw on Sunday and the opportunity of a replay. He is adamant that he has not only recovered peak fitness but also that he has banished the confusion that had made him question his future at Highbury. No, he said, he would not walk away from English football in the summer, as he had threatened in the immediate aftermath of his most recent dismissal.

against Everton. No, he was not afraid of English referees. "It's true that I tried to give my shirt to the referee after the Everton match and said I was finished with the game here, but I will stay at Arsenal next season," Petit said. "I was very upset because I had just one red card in France in ten years and now I have had four in England, so you can imagine how I felt when I got the last one. I had made only two fouls in the whole game."

"It won't change how I play."

Riverside players.....40
Jones exonerated.....40

but it is very difficult for referees now in games with Arsenal. We are not a dirty team, but when there is a foul, the whole ground puts intense pressure on the referee and if he is not a strong man, he will give out cards."

Fears that Petit might use his repeated clashes with authority as an excuse to leave Arsenal for Spain or Italy had been widespread at Highbury, but Arsène Wenger appears to have used all his persuasive charms to lift his compatriot from his depression. "A competitive guy who does not have competition gets sick," the

Arsenal manager said, "and Petit needs competition to be happy."

"I can understand why, when you are in a foreign country and you keep coming back and then getting suspended again, that life is very difficult. But the fans have done as much as me to persuade him to stay."

A combination of suspension and ankle injury has meant that Petit has started only two of the past 12 games and his return will compensate Arsenal for the likely absence of Marc Overmars, who will have a fitness test this morning on a sore ankle. Fredrik Ljungberg, rather than Nelson Vivas, whose dismissal on Sunday spoils an otherwise excellent display, is his probable replacement.

Ferguson also hinted at changes yesterday, but it is unlikely that he will rest too many players until the FA Carling Premiership match against Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday. Paul Scholes may return in place of Nicky Butt, while Jesper Blomqvist is putting pressure on Ryan Giggs, but the defence is likely to remain unchanged, with Denis Irwin fit after sustaining an injury at Villa Park.

The United attack must breach an Arsenal defence that has not conceded a goal for 673 minutes and Ferguson's strikers are not in prolific form. Dwight Yorke has not scored for six games and Andy Cole for five, which is a drought by their standards. However, Ferguson looked far from worried yesterday, shrugging off suggestions that his side's attempt at a treble may leave them too tired to secure even one trophy.

"Goals always tend to dry up at this stage of the season," he said. "You are never going to get runaway victories, but the confidence is high. The players have been consistently brilliant, finishing first and second in the league over the years, and that speaks volumes for what a great team we have."

"This is the sort of situation we have been working at for years and the players are enjoying it. It is a good time for them and you can only be jealous that they are playing and you are not."

The fact that both teams practised penalties yesterday would suggest that the managers are expecting another tight game. It may be late into the night before Newcastle United discover who they will be facing in the FA Cup final at Wembley on May 22.

ARSENAL (probable 4-4-2): O Seaman — L. Dixon, M. Keown, T. Adams, N. Winterburn — D. Campbell, P. Parker, E. Horne, F. Ljungberg — D. Bergkamp, N. Anelka.

MANCHESTER UNITED (probable 4-4-2): P. Schuster — G. Healy, R. Johnson, J. S. Smith, D. Irwin — O. Bergkamp, R. Keane, P. Scholes, R. Giggs — D. Yorke, A. Cole.



Boon, the Durham captain, who arrived recently in the North East after a summer in Australia, practises his catching skills by juggling with snowballs on the outfield at the Riverside. Photograph: Stuart Outterside

Winter mocks early starters

By MICHAEL AUSTIN

SNOW, two inches of it, prevented any play at Chester-le-Street between Durham and Worcestershire yesterday as winter returned with a vengeance to bite into the earliest start to any county championship cricket season.

Norman Gifford, the Durham coach, who has been involved at first-class level for 42 years, was dumbfounded. "I have never seen snow like that on any English ground," he said. "When I arrived at 8.30am, everything was ready for a prompt start. Within two hours, the ground was com-

pletely white. I have seen April snow flurries, but they have always cleared quickly."

As upset as anyone was David Measor, the Durham head groundsman, who had prepared his first championship pitch since taking over from Tom Flintoft, who had been in charge since the county's elevation to first-class status seven years ago.

Ironically, in Durham's inaugural match that season, snow caused an interruption against Oxford University in

the Parks, although the most famous modern instance of snow stopping play came in the game between Derbyshire and Lancashire at Buxton 24 years ago — but that was in June.

The late Ashley Harvey-Walker, of Derbyshire, handed his false teeth to the umpire because the pitch was becoming dangerous.

Not unexpectedly, there was also a blank day at Old Trafford, where Lancashire are playing host to Sussex.

County reports, page 41

Celtic secure Larsson's future

By PHIL GORDON

CELTIC demonstrated their willingness yesterday to compete with the wealthiest clubs in Europe by securing Henrik Larsson, the leading goalscorer, on a new four-year contract. It will make the Swedish player the wealthiest in Celtic's history.

Larsson, 27, has signed with the Scottish champions until 2003 for a reported salary of £1.3 million a year, an act of faith by Celtic that is at odds with the club's tradition of being parsimonious.

Larsson's 37 goals this season had attracted widespread interest from around the Continent, including Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United, of the FA Carling Premiership, who were all mindful that he was about to enter the last year of his existing contract.

For a club that has failed to retain any of its key players over the past two decades, the loss of Larsson would have been a blow that extended far beyond the pitch. It would have sent out the signal that Celtic, unlike Rangers, were still willing to cut corners

when it came to rewarding its players. In the past, Kenny Dalglish, Charlie Nicholas and Brian McClair multiplied their Parkhead salaries by going to Liverpool, Arsenal and Manchester United respectively. Similarly, Pierre van Hooijdonk and Paolo Di Canio left in 1997, when the envy of English salaries became too great.

Earlier this season, Celtic's players were embroiled in a damaging dispute with Ferguson

McCann, the then-chairman, who refused to meet their demands for a £25,000-per-man bonus for reaching the European Cup Champions' League group stage. However, Allan MacDonald, the club's new managing director, who took control only last week after McCann, the majority shareholder, departed for tax exile, indicated that the club is undergoing a sea change.

"I quickly understood that the team is the most important thing at the club," MacDonald said. "Getting quality players is our most important objective. I had to instil order where there was perhaps a perceived disorder and Henrik is the foundation stone upon which I would like to build the team."

Recent reports claimed that Larsson had been given a take-it-or-leave-it offer by McCann, which is not the way to approach the single-minded Swede. Larsson took his previous club, Feyenoord, to court in order to win his cut-price £650,000 transfer to Celtic in 1997.



Larsson: happy in Scotland

Larsson's decision is as much prompted by lifestyle as money and he was fearful of Brian Laudrup's admission that he made a mistake in leaving Glasgow to join Chelsea last year. "My family have come to love Scotland and are settled here. The quality of life here makes this the right decision. It was a big decision to make, because I will be 32 when this contract ends. However, Celtic is a very big club and has the potential to be even bigger."

Larsson's news somewhat overshadowed the arrival in Glasgow yesterday of Rangers' latest signing, Claudio Reyna, the United States midfielder, who has signed a four-year contract after his £1.2million transfer from the German club, VfL Wolfsburg. Reyna will be unable to play in the Scottish Cup final next month against Celtic, but hopes to contribute to the push to regain the championship.

Sprint finish, page 40

Bradley charged in racing inquiry

By STEWART TENDLER AND ALAN LEE

AFTER two years of speculation and dramatic arrests by Scotland Yard detectives, involving a number of leading figures in horse-racing, a jockey was charged yesterday. The rider concerned is Graham Bradley, 38, the senior jumps jockey, who is accused of conspiracy to cheat.

He was released on police bail and will appear at Bow Street Magistrates' Court today accused of preventing his mount, Man Mood, from winning a two-runner handicap chase at Warwick in November 1996. Man Mood, the 7-4 on favourite, was pulled up. A stewards' inquiry accepted Bradley's explanation that the horse lost his action due to a wind ailment.

Bradley has been charged under the Criminal Law Act 1977. He is accused of conspiring with others to win bets on the race by fraud and agreeing that Man Mood would not win.

In a 21-year National Hunt career, Bradley has won many of the leading races, including the Cheltenham Gold Cup in 1983, on Bregawn, and the Champion Hurdle in 1996, on

Racing.....39

Collier Bay. He now also faces a review of his rider's licence by the Jockey Club.

Bradley, stable jockey at the Uplands yard owned by Fred Winter, rode Sun Bay in the Grand National last Saturday. Hewas arrested at his home in Sparsholt, Oxfordshire, in January in the latest in a series of police raids. Ray Cochrane, a flat jockey, and Charlie Brooks, trainer of Man Mood, were also arrested. Cochrane was eliminated from police inquiries last month and Brooks was released without charge yesterday after earlier being freed on bail.

Last year, police arrested three other jockeys — Dean Gallagher, Leighton Aspell and Jamie Osborne. They have also been released without charge.

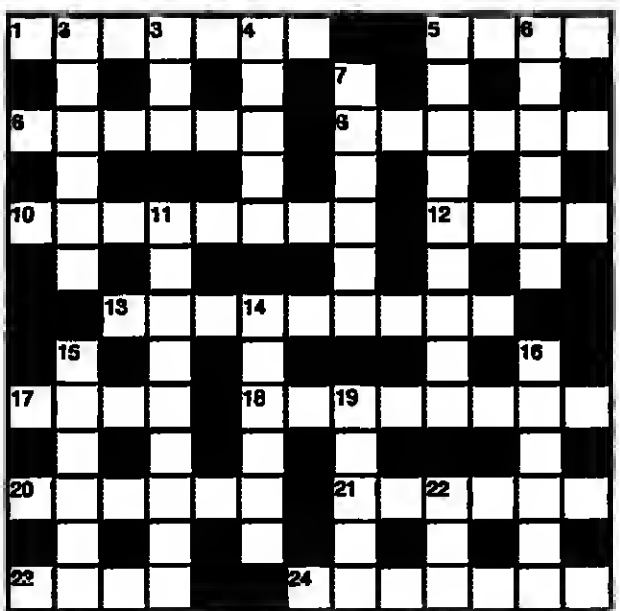
Today, five men accused of conspiracy to defraud by doping horses are also due to appear at Bow Street. They are accused of "interference with the running of horses in horse-racing by the administration of a performance-inhibiting drug".

Manchester United have failed to beat Arsenal in six matches dating back to November 1997. During the same period, the London side has lifted the Premiership, the FA Cup and the Charity Shield.

Nov 9 1997	Arsenal 3	Man Utd 2	Premiership
Mar 14 1998	Man Utd 0	Arsenal 1	Premiership
Aug 9 1998	Arsenal 3	Man Utd 0	Charity Shield
Sep 20 1998	Arsenal 3	Man Utd 0	Premiership
Feb 17 1999	Man Utd 1	Arsenal 1	Premiership
Apr 11 1999	Man Utd 0	Arsenal 0 (aet)	FA Cup s/final

Television: Sky Sports 2, 7pm Radio: Radio 5 Live

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1691

ACROSS

- Moral campaign: religious war (7)
- A square measure: city attacked by ts (4)
- Forge (6)
- Pressing (6)
- (Eg Churchill's) depression (5,3)
- Cry loudly: sounds like dance (4)
- Opening in battlement (9)
- Ill-mannered person (4)
- Japanese beef dish (8)
- (Trap) closed: helped to escape (from prison) (6)
- Strongly criticise (6)
- Detained (4)
- Prolonged (7)

DOWN

- Low sound: see through (trick) (slang) (6)
- (Complete) group of like things (3)
- Tree spirit (5)
- Noisy wrangle (4-5)
- Fame (6)
- Organism as eg rust, yeast (6)
- Pop in: be persuaded (4,5)
- Give up (post) (6)
- Pair (6)
- Rough drawing (6)
- Oxford Movement leader: Ox. college (5)
- Fix up (fraudulently): outfit (3)

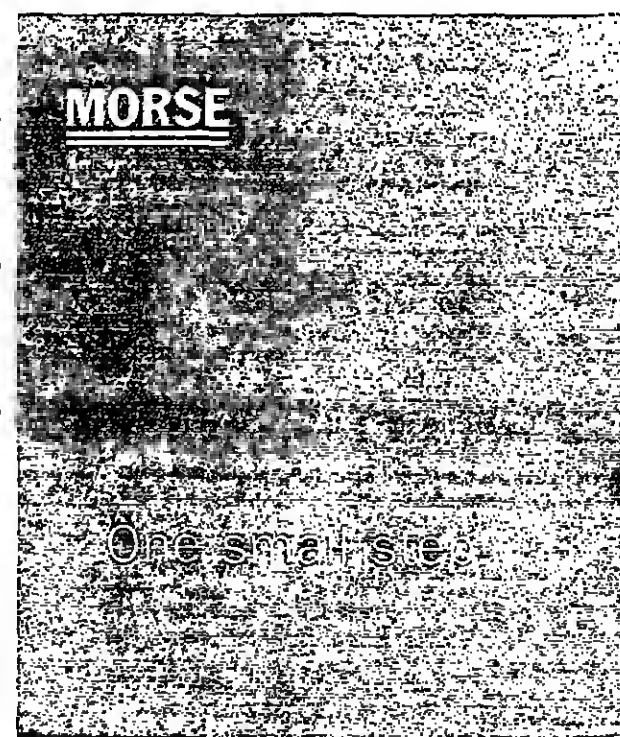
SOLUTION TO NO 1690

- ACROSS: 1 Abandon 5 Verve 8 Circa 9 Twelfth
10 Indolent 11 Blur 13 Encyclopedia 16 July
17 Wretched 20 Afghani 21 Liven 22 Sleek 23 Essence
DOWN: 1 Ascribe 2 Acid 3 Deadlock 4 Not on your life
5 Veer 6 Ruffled 7 Ether 12 Nautlius 14 Cologne
15 Al dente 16 Jeans 18 Haven 19 Bask

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